MORE POEMS

BY

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX



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ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

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POEMS OF POWER

THE QUEEN'S LAST RIDE

(WRITTEN ON THE DAY OF QUEEN VICTORIA'S FUNERAL)

THE Queen is taking a drive to-day,
They have hung with purple the carriage-way,
They have dressed with purple the royal track
Where the Queen goes forth and never comes back.

Let no man labour as she goes by
On her last appearance to mortal eye;
With heads uncovered let all men wait
For the Queen to pass, in her regal state.

Army and Navy shall lead the way
For that wonderful coach of the Queen's to-day.
Kings and Princes and Lords of the land
Shall ride behind her, a humble band;
And over the city and over the world
Shall the Flags of all Nations be half-mast-furled,
For the silent lady of royal birth
Who is riding away from the Courts of earth,
Riding away from the world's unrest
To a mystical goal, on a secret quest.

Though in royal splendour she drives through town,
Her robes are simple, she wears no crown :
And yet she wears one, for, widowed no more,
She is crowned with the love that has gone before,
And crowned with the love she has left behind
In the hidden depths of each mourner's mind.

Bow low your heads—lift your hearts on high—
The Queen in silence is driving by !

THE MEETING OF THE CENTURIES

A CURIOUS vision on mine eyes unfurled
In the deep night. I saw, or seemed to see,
Two Centuries meet, and sit down vis-à-vis
Across the great round table of the world :
One with suggested sorrows in his mien,
And on his brow the furrowed lines of thought ;
And one whose glad expectant presence brought
A glow and radiance from the realms unseen.

Hand clasped with hand, in silence for a space
The Centuries sat ; the sad old eyes of one
(As grave paternal eyes regard a son)
Gazing upon that other eager face.
And then a voice, as cadenceless and grey
As the sea's monody in winter time,
Mingled with tones melodious, as the chime
Of bird choirs, singing in the dawns of May.

THE OLD CENTURY SPEAKS

By you, Hope stands. With me, Experience walks.
Like a fair jewel in a faded box,
In my tear-rusted heart, sweet Pity lies.
For all the dreams that look forth from your eyes,
And those bright-hued ambitions which I know
Must fall like leaves and perish in Time's snow,
(Even as my soul's garden stands bereft,)
I give you pity! 'tis the one gift left.

THE NEW CENTURY

Nay, nay, good friend! not pity, but Godspeed,
Here in the morning of my life I need.
Counsel, and not condolence; smiles, not tears,
To guide me through the channels of the years.
Oh, I am blinded by the blaze of light
That shines upon me from the Infinite.
Blurred is my vision by the close approach
To unseen shores, whereon the times encroach.

THE OLD CENTURY

Illusion, all illusion. List and hear
The Godless cannons, booming far and near.
Flaunting the flag of Unbelief, with Greed
For pilot, lo! the pirate age in speed
Bears on to ruin. War's most hideous crimes
Besmirch the record of these modern times.
Degenerate is the world I leave to you,—
My happiest speech to earth will be—adieu.

THE NEW CENTURY

You speak as one too weary to be just.
I hear the guns—I see the greed and lust.
The death throes of a giant evil fill
The air with riot and confusion. Ill
Ofttimes makes fallow ground for Good; and Wrong
Build's Right's foundation, when it grows too strong.
Pregnant with promise is the hour, and grand
The trust you leave in my all-willing hand.

THE OLD CENTURY

As one who throws a flickering taper's ray
To light departing feet, my shadowed way
You brighten with your faith. Faith makes the man.
Alas, that my poor foolish age outran
Its early trust in God! The death of art
And progress follows, when the world's hard heart
Casts out religion. 'Tis the human brain
Men worship now, and heaven, to them, means—gain.

THE NEW CENTURY

Faith is not dead, tho' priest and creed may pass,
For thought has leavened the whole unthinking mass,
And man looks now to find the God within.
We shall talk more of love, and less of sin,
In this new era. We are drawing near
Unatlassed boundaries of a larger sphere.
With awe, I wait, till Science leads us on,
Into the full effulgence of its dawn.

DEATH HAS CROWNED HIM A MARTYR

(WRITTEN ON THE DAY OF PRESIDENT MCKINLEY'S DEATH)

IN the midst of sunny waters, lo! the mighty Ship
of State
Staggers, bruised and torn and wounded by a derelict of
fate,
One that drifted from its moorings in the anchorage of
hate.

On the deck our noble Pilot, in the glory of his prime,
Lies in woe-impelling silence, dead before his hour or
time,
Victim of a mind self-centred in a Godless fool of crime.

One of earth's dissension-breeders, one of Hate's un-
reasoning tools,
In the annals of the ages, when the world's hot anger
cools,
He who sought for Crime's distinction shall be known
as Chief of Fools.

In the annals of the ages, he who had no thought of
fame
(Keeping on the path of duty, caring not for praise or
blame),
Close beside the deathless Lincoln, writ in light, will
shine his name.

Youth proclaimed him as a hero; time, a statesman; love, a man;
Death has crowned him as a martyr,—so from goal to goal he ran,
Knowing all the sum of glory that a human life may span.

He was chosen by the people; not an accident of birth
Made him ruler of a nation, but his own intrinsic worth.
Fools may govern over kingdoms—not republics of the earth.

He has raised the lovers' standard by his loyalty and faith,
He has shown how virile manhood may keep free from scandal's breath.
He has gazed, with trust unshaken, in the awful eyes of Death.

In the mighty march of progress he has sought to do his best.
Let his enemies be silent, as we lay him down to rest,
And may God assuage the anguish of one suffering woman's breast.

GRIEF

AS the funeral train with its honoured dead
  On its mournful way went sweeping,
While a sorrowful nation bowed its head
  And the whole world joined in weeping,
I thought, as I looked on the solemn sight,
  Of the one fond heart despairing,
And I said to myself, as in truth I might,
  "How sad must be this *sharing*."

To share the living with even Fame,
  For a heart that is only human,
Is hard, when Glory asserts her claim
  Like a bold, insistent woman;
Yet a great, grand passion can put aside
  Or stay each selfish emotion,
And watch, with a pleasure that springs from pride,
  Its rival—the world's devotion.

But Death should render to love its own,
  And my heart bowed down and sorrowed
For the stricken woman who wept alone
  While even her *dead* was borrowed;
Borrowed from her, the bride—the wife—
  For the world's last martial honour,
As she sat in the gloom of her darkened life,
  With her widow's grief fresh upon her.

He had shed the glory of Love and Fame
In a golden halo about her;
She had shared his triumphs and worn his name:
But, alas! he had died without her.
He had wandered in many a distant realm,
And never had left her behind him,
But now, with a spectral shape at the helm,
He had sailed where she could not find him.

It was only a thought, that came that day
In the midst of the muffled drumming
And funeral music and sad display,
That I knew was right and becoming
Only a thought as the mourning train
Moved, column after column,
Bearing the dead to the burial plain
With a reverence grand as solemn.

ILLUSION

GOD and I in space alone
And nobody else in view.
"And where are the people, O Lord," I said,
"The earth below, and the sky o'erhead,
And the dead whom once I knew?"

"That was a dream," God smiled and said—
"A dream that seemed to be true.
There were no people, living or dead,
There was no earth, and no sky o'erhead;
There was only Myself—in you."

"Why do I feel no fear," I asked,
"Meeting You here this way?
For I have sinned I know full well?
And is there heaven, and is there hell,
And is this the judgment day?"

"Say, those were but dreams," the Great God said,
"Dreams, that have ceased to be.
There are no such things as fear or sin,
There is no you—you never have been—
There is nothing at all but *Me*."

ASSERTION

I AM serenity. Though passions beat
Like mighty billows on my helpless heart,
I know beyond them lies the perfect sweet
Serenity, which patience can impart.
And when wild tempests in my bosom rage,
"Peace, peace," I cry, "it is my heritage."

I am good health. Though fevers rack my brain
And rude disorders mutilate my strength,
A perfect restoration after pain,
I know shall be my recompense at length.
And so through grievous day and sleepless night,
"Health, health," I cry, "it is my own by right."

I am success. Though hungry, cold, ill-clad,
I wander for awhile, I smile and say,
"It is but for a time—I shall be glad
To-morrow, for good fortune comes my way.
God is my father, He has wealth untold,
His wealth is mine, health, happiness, and gold.'

I AM

I KNOW not whence I came,
I know not whither I go ;
But the fact stands clear that I am here
In this world of pleasure and woe.
And out of the mist and murk
Another truth shines plain—
It is my power each day and hour
To add to its joy or its pain.

I know that the earth exists,
It is none of my business why ;
I cannot find out what it's all about,
I would not waste time to try.
My life is a brief, brief thing,
I am here for a little space,
And while I stay I would like, if I may,
To brighten and better the place.

The trouble, I think, with us all
  Is the lack of a high conceit.
If each man thought he was sent to this spot
  To make it a bit more sweet,
How soon we could gladden the world,
  How easily right all wrong,
If nobody shirked, and each one worked
  To help his fellows along!

Cease wondering why you came—
  Stop looking for faults and flaws;
Rise up to-day in your pride and say,
  "I am part of the First Great Cause
However full the world,
  There is room for an earnest man.
It had need of me, or I would not be—
  I am here to strengthen the plan."

WISHING

Do you wish the world were better
  Let me tell you what to do:
Set a watch upon your actions,
  Keep them always straight and true;
Rid your mind of selfish motives;
  Let your thoughts be clean and high.
You can make a little Eden
  Of the sphere you occupy.

Do you wish the world were wiser?
Well, suppose you make a start,
By accumulating wisdom
In the scrapbook of your heart:
Do not waste one page on folly;
Live to learn, and learn to live.
If you want to give men knowledge
You must get it, ere you give.

Do you wish the world were happy?
Then remember day by day
Just to scatter seeds of kindness
As you pass along the way;
For the pleasures of the many
May be ofttimes traced to one,
As the hand that plants an acorn
Shelters armies from the sun.

WE TWO

WE two make home of any place we go;
We two find joy in any kind of weather;
Or if the earth is clothed in bloom or snow,
If summer days invite, or bleak winds blow,
What matters it if we two are together?
We two, we two, we make our world, our weather.

We two make banquets of the plainest fare;
In every cup we find the thrill of pleasure;
We hide with wreaths the furrowed brow of care,

And win to smiles the set lips of despair.
For us life always moves with lilting measure;
We two, we two, we make our world, our pleasure.

We two find youth renewed with every dawn;
Each day holds something of an unknown glory.
We waste no thought on grief or pleasure gone;
Tricked out like hope, time leads us on and on,
And thrums upon his harp new song or story.
We two, we two, we find the paths of glory.

We two make heaven here on this little earth;
We do not need to wait for realms eternal.
We know the use of tears, know sorrow's worth,
And pain for us is always love's rebirth.
Our paths lead closely by the paths supernal;
We two, we two, we live in love eternal.

THE POET'S THEME

"What is the explanation of the strange silence of American poets concerning American triumphs on sea and land?"—*Literary Digest.*

WHY should the poet of these pregnant times
Be asked to sing of war's unholy crimes?

To laud and eulogise the trade which thrives
On horrid holocausts of human lives?

Man was a fighting beast when earth was young,
And war the only theme when Homer sung.

'Twixt might and might the equal contest lay,
Not so the battles of our modern day.

Too often now the conquering hero struts
A Gulliver among the Liliputs.

Success no longer rests on skill or fate,
But on the movements of a syndicate.

Of old men fought and deemed it right and just.
To-day the warrior fights because he must,

And in his secret soul feels shame because
He desecrates the higher manhood's laws.

Oh ! there are worthier themes for poet's pen
In this great hour, than bloody deeds of men

Or triumphs of one hero (though he be
Deserving song for his humility) :

The rights of many—not the worth of one ;
The coming issues—not the battle done ;

The awful opulence, and awful need ;
The rise of brotherhood—the fall of greed,

The soul of man replete with God's own force,
The call "to heights," and not the cry "to horse,"—

Are there not better themes in this great age
For pen of poet, or for voice of sage

Than those old tales of killing? Song is dumb
Only that greater song in time may come.

When comes the bard, he whom the world waits for,
He will not sing of War.

SONG OF THE SPIRIT

ALL the aim of life is just
  Getting back to God.
Spirit casting off its dust,
  Getting back to God.
Every grief we have to bear
Disappointment, cross, despair
Each is but another stair
  Climbing back to God

Step by step and mile by mile—
  Getting back to God;
Nothing else is worth the while—
  Getting back to God.
Light and shadow fill each day,
Joys and sorrows pass away,
Smile at all, and smiling, say,
  Getting back to God.

Do not wear a mournful face
  Getting back to God;
Scatter sunshine on the place
  Going back to God;

Take what pleasure you can find,
But where'er your paths may wind,
Keep the purpose well in mind,—
Getting back to God.

WOMANHOOD

SHE must be honest, both in thought and deed,
Of generous impulse, and above all greed;
Not seeking praise, or place, or power, or pelf,
But life's best blessings for her higher self,
Which means the best for all.
She must have faith,
To make good friends of Trouble, Pain, and Death,
And understand their message.
She should be
As redolent with tender sympathy
As is a rose with fragrance.
Cheerfulness
Should be her mantle, even though her dress
May be of Sorrow's weaving.
On her face
A loyal nature leaves its seal of grace,
And chastity is in her atmosphere.
Not that chill chastity which seems austere
(Like untrod snow-peaks, lovely to behold
Till once attained—then barren, loveless, cold)

But the white flame that feeds upon the soul
And lights the pathway to a peaceful goal.
A sense of humour, and a touch of mirth,
To brighten up the shadowy spots of earth ;
And pride that passes evil—choosing good.
All these unite in perfect womanhood.

MORNING PRAYER

LET me to-day do something that shall take
A little sadness from the world's vast store,
And may I be so favoured as to make
Of joy's too scanty sum a little more.
Let me not hurt, by any selfish deed
Or thoughtless word, the heart of foe or friend ;
Nor would I pass, unseeing, worthy need,
Or sin by silence when I should defend.
However meagre be my worldly wealth,
Let me give something that shall aid my kind—
A word of courage, or a thought of health,
Dropped as I pass for troubled hearts to find.
Let me to-night look back across the span
'Twixt dawn and dark, and to my conscience say—
Because of some good act to beast or man—
"The world is better that I lived to-day."

THE VOICES OF THE PEOPLE

OH! I hear the people calling through the day time and the night time,
They are calling they are crying for the coming of the right time.
It behooves you, men and women, it behooves you to be heeding,
For there lurks a note of menace underneath their plaintive pleading.

Let the land usurpers listen, let the greedy-hearted ponder,
On the meaning of the murmur, rising here and swelling yonder,
Swelling louder, waxing stronger, like a storm-fed stream that courses
Through the valleys, down abysses, growing, gaining with new forces.

Day by day the river widens, that great river of opinion,
And its torrent beats and plunges at the base of greed's dominion.
Though you dam it by oppression and fling golden bridges o'er it,
Yet the day and hour advances when in fright you'll flee before it.

Yes, I hear the people calling, through the night time
and the day time,
Wretched toilers in life's autumn, weary young ones in
life's May time—
They are crying, they are calling for their share of work
and pleasure;
You are heaping high your coffers while you give them
scanty measure,
You have stolen God's wide acres, just to glut your
swollen purses—
Oh! restore them to His children ere their pleading turns
to curses.

THE WORLD GROWS BETTER

OH! the earth is full of sinning
And of trouble and of woe,
But the devil makes an inning
Every time we say it's so.
And the way to set him scowling,
And to put him back a pace,
Is to stop this stupid growling,
And to look things in the face.

If you glance at history's pages,
In all lands and eras known,
You will find the buried ages
Far more wicked than our own.

As you scan each word and letter,
You will realise it more,
That the world to-day is better
Than it ever was before.

There is much that needs amending
In the present time, no doubt;
There is right that needs amending,
There is wrong needs crushing out.
And we hear the groans and curses
Of the poor who starve and die,
While the men with swollen purses
In the place of hearts go by.

But in spite of all the trouble
That obscures the sun to-day,
Just remember it was double
In the ages passed away.
And those wrongs shall all be righted,
Good shall dominate the land,
For the darkness now is lighted
By the torch in Science's hand.

Forth from little motes in Chaos,
We have come to what we are;
And no evil force can stay us—
We shall mount from star to star,
We shall break each bond and fetter
That has bound us heretofore;
And the earth is surely better
Than it ever was before.

A MAN'S IDEAL

A LOVELY little keeper of the home,
Absorbed in menu books, yet erudite
When I need counsel; quick at repartee
And slow to anger. Modest as a flower,
Yet scintillant and radiant as a star.
Unmercenary in her mould of mind,
While opulent and dainty in her tastes.
A nature generous and free, albeit
The incarnation of economy.
She must be chaste as proud Diana was,
Yet warm as Venus. To all others cold
As some white glacier glittering in the sun;
To me as ardent as the sensuous rose
That yields its sweetness to the burrowing bee.
All ignorant of evil in the world,
And innocent as any cloistered nun,
Yet wise as Phryne in the arts of love
When I come thirsting to her nectared lips.
Good as the best, and tempting as the worst,
A saint, a siren, and a paradox.

THE FIRE BRIGADE

HARK! high o'er the rattle and clamour and clatter
  Of traffic-filled streets, do you hear that loud noise?
And pushing and rushing to see what's the matter,
  Like herds of wild cattle, go pell-mell the boys.

There's a fire in the city! the engines are coming!
  The bold bells are clanging, "Make way in the street!"
The wheels of the hose-cart are spinning and humming
  In time to the music of galloping feet.

Make way there! make way there! the horses are flying,
  The sparks from their swift hoofs shoot higher and higher,
The crowds are increasing—the gamins are crying:
  "Hooray, boys!" "Hooray, boys!" "Come on to the fire!"

With clanging and banging and clatter and rattle
  The long ladders follow the engines and hose.
The men are all ready to dash into battle;
  But will they come out again? God only knows.

At windows and doorways crowd questioning faces;
  There's something about it that quickens one's breath.
How proudly the brave fellows sit in their places—
  And speed to the conflict that may be their death!

Still faster and faster and faster and faster
  The grand horses thunder and leap on their way.
The red foe is yonder, and may prove the master;
  Turn out there, bold traffic—turn out there, I say!

For once the loud truckman knows oaths will not matter,
  And reins in his horses and yields to his fate.
The engines are coming! the pleasure-crowds scatter
  Let street car and truckman and mail waggon wait.

They speed like a comet—they pass in a minute;
  The boys follow on like a tail to a kite;
The commonplace street has but traffic now in it—
  The great fire engines have swept out of sight.

THE TIDES

BE careful what rubbish you toss in the tide,
  On outgoing billows it drifts from your sight,
But back on the incoming waves it may ride
  And land at your threshold again before night.
Be careful what rubbish you toss in the tide.

Be careful what follies you toss in life's sea.
  On bright dancing billows they drift far away,
But back on the Nemesis tides they may be
  Thrown down at your threshold an unwelcome day
Be careful what follies you toss in youth's sea.

WHEN THE REGIMENT CAME BACK

ALL the uniforms were blue, all the swords were bright and new,
When the regiment went marching down the street,
All the men were hale and strong as they proudly moved along,
Through the cheers that drowned the music of their feet.
Oh the music of the feet keeping time to drums that beat,
Oh the splendour and the glitter of the sight,
As with swords and rifles new and in uniforms of blue
The regiment went marching to the fight!

When the regiment came back all the guns and swords were black
And the uniforms had faded out to grey,
And the faces of the men who marched through that street again
Seemed like faces of the dead who lose their way.
For the dead who lose their way cannot look more wan and gray.
Oh the sorrow and the pity of the sight,
Oh the weary lagging feet out of step with drums that beat,
As the regiment comes marching from the fight.

WOMAN TO MAN

"Woman is man's enemy, rival, and competitor."—JOHN J. INGALLS.

YOU do but jest, sir, and you jest not well,
How could the hand be enemy of the arm,
Or seed and sod be rivals! How could light
Feel jealousy of heat, plant of the leaf,
Or competition dwell 'twixt lip and smile?
Are we not part and parcel of yourselves?
Like strands in one great braid we entertwine
And make the perfect whole. You could not be,
Unless we gave you birth; we are the soil
From which you sprang, yet sterile were that soil
Save as you planted. (Though in the Book we read
One woman bore a child with no man's aid,
We find no record of a man-child born
Without the aid of woman! Fatherhood
Is but a small achievement at the best,
While motherhood comprises heaven and hell.)
This ever-growing argument of sex
Is most unseemly, and devoid of sense.
Why waste more time in controversy, when
There is not time enough for all of love,
Our rightful occupation in this life?
Why prate of our defects, of where we fail,
When just the story of our worth would need

Eternity for telling, and our best
Development comes ever through your praise,
As through our praise you reach your highest self?
Oh! had you not been miser of your praise
And let our virtues be their own reward,
The old-established order of the world
Would never have been changed. Small blame is
ours
For this unsexing of ourselves, and worse
Effeminising of the male. We were
Content, sir, till you starved us, heart and brain.
All we have done, or wise, or otherwise,
Traced to the root, was done for love of you.
Let us taboo all vain comparisons,
And go forth as God meant us, hand in hand,
Companions, mates, and comrades evermore;
Two parts of one divinely ordained whole.

THE EARTH

THE earth is yours and mine,
Our God's bequest.
That testament divine
Who dare contest?

Usurpers of the earth,
We claim our share.
We are of royal birth.
Beware! beware!

Unloose the hand of greed
From God's fair land,
We claim but what we need—
That, we demand.

NOW

I LEAVE with God to-morrow's where and how,
And do concern myself but with the Now,
That little word, though half the future's length,
Well used, holds twice its meaning and its strength.

Like one blindfolded groping out his way,
I will not try to touch beyond to-day.
Since all the future is concealed from sight
I need but strive to make the next step right.

That done, the next, and so on, till I find
Perchance some day I am no longer blind,
And looking up, behold a radiant Friend
Who says, "Rest, now, for you have reached the end."

YOU AND TO-DAY

WITH every rising of the sun
Think of your life as just begun.

The past has shrived and buried deep
All yesterdays—there let them sleep,

Nor seek to summon back one ghost
Of that innumerable host,

Concern yourself with but to-day;
Woo it and teach it to obey

Your wish and will. Since time began
To-day has been the friend of man.

But in his blindness and his sorrow
He looks to yesterday and to-morrow.

You and to-day! a soul sublime
And the great pregnant hour of time.

With God between to bind the train,
Go forth, I say—attain—attain.

THE REASON

DO you know what moves the tides
As they swing from low to high?
'Tis the love, love, love,
Of the moon within the sky.
Oh! they follow where she guides,
Do the faithful-hearted tides.

Do you know what moves the earth
Out of winter into spring?
'Tis the love, love, love,
Of the sun, the mighty king.
Oh the rapture that finds birth
In the kiss of sun and earth!

Do you know what makes sweet songs
Ring for me above earth's strife?
'Tis the love, love, love,
That you bring into my life.
Oh the glory of the songs
In the heart where love belongs!

MISSION

IF you are sighing for a lofty work,
If great ambitions dominate your mind,
Just watch yourself and see you do not shirk
The common little ways of being kind.

If you are dreaming of a future goal,
When, crowned with glory, men shall own your power,
Be careful that you let no struggling soul
Go by unaided in the present hour.

If you are moved to pity for the earth,
And long to aid it, do not look so high,
You pass some poor, dumb creature faint with thirst—
All life is equal in the eternal eye.

If you would help to make the wrong things right,
Begin at home: there lies a lifetime's toil.
Weed your own garden fair for all men's sight,
Before you plan to till another's soil.

God chooses His own leaders in the world,
And from the rest He asks but willing hands.
As mighty mountains into place are hurled,
While patient tides may only shape the sands.

REPETITION

OVER and over and over
These truths I will weave in song—
That God's great plan needs you and me,
That will is greater than destiny,
And that love moves the world along.

However mankind may doubt it,
It shall listen and hear my creed—
That God may ever be found within,
That the worship of self is the only sin,
And the only devil is greed.

Over and over and over
These truths I will say and sing,
That love is mightier far than hate,
That a man's own thought is a man's own fate,
And that life is a goodly thing.

BEGIN THE DAY

BEGIN each morning with a talk to God,
And ask for your divine inheritance
Of usefulness, contentment, and success.
Resign all fear, all doubt, and all despair.
The stars doubt not, and they are undismayed,
Though whirled through space for countless centuries,
And told not why or wherefore: and the sea
With everlasting ebb and flow obeys,
And leaves the purpose with the unseen Cause.
The star sheds radiance on a million worlds,
The sea is prodigal with waves, and yet
No lustre from the star is lost, and not
One drop is missing from the ocean tides.
Oh! brother to the star and sea, know all
God's opulence is held in trust for those
Who wait serenely and who work in faith.

WORDS

WORDS are great forces in the realm of life:
Be careful of their use. Who talks of hate,
Of poverty, of sickness, but sets rife
These very elements to mar his fate.

When love, health, happiness, and plenty hear
Their names repeated over day by day,
They wing their way like answering fairies near,
Then nestle down within our homes to stay.

Who talks of evil conjures into shape
The formless thing and gives it life and scope.
This is the law: then let no word escape
That does not breathe of everlasting hope.

FATE AND I

WISE men tell me thou, O Fate,
Art invincible and great.

Well, I own thy prowess; still
Dare I flout thee with my will.

Thou canst shatter in a span
All the earthly pride of man.

Outward things thou canst control;
But stand back—I rule my soul!

Death? 'Tis such a little thing—
Scarcely worth the mentioning.

What has death to do with me,
Save to set my spirit free?

Something in me dwells, O Fate,
That can rise and dominate.

Loss, and sorrow, and disaster,—
How, then, Fate, art thou my master?

In the great primeval morn
My immortal will was born,

Part of that stupendous Cause
Which conceived the Solar Laws,

Lit the suns and filled the seas,
Royalest of pedigrees.

That great Cause was Love, the Source
Who most loves has most of Force.

He who harbours Hate one hour
Saps the soul of Peace and Power.

He who will not hate his foe
Need not dread life's hardest blow.

In the realm of brotherhood
Wishing no man aught but good,

Naught but good can come to me—
This is love's supreme decree.

Since I bar my door to Hate,
What have I to fear, O Fate?

Since I fear not—Fate I vow,
I the ruler am, not thou!

ATTAINMENT

USE all your hidden forces. Do not miss
The purpose of this life, and do not wai
For circumstance to mould or change your fate
In your own self lies Destiny. Let this

Vast truth cast out all fear, all prejudice,
All hesitation. Know that you are great,
Great with divinity. So dominate
Environment, and enter into bliss.
Love largely and hate nothing. Hold no aim
That does not chord with universal good.
Hear what the voices of the Silence say—
All joys are yours if you put forth your claim.
Once let the spiritual laws be understood,
Material things must answer and obey.

A PLEA TO PEACE

WHEN mighty issues loom before us, all
The petty great men of the day seem small,
Like pigmies standing in a blaze of light
Before some grim majestic mountain-height.
War, with its bloody and impartial hand,
Reveals the hidden weakness of a land,
Uncrowns the heroes trusting Peace has made
Of men whose honour is a thing of trade,
And turns the searchlight full on many a place
Where proud conventions long have masked disgrace
O lovely Peace! as thou art fair be wise.
Demand great men, and great men shall arise
To do thy bidding. Even as warriors come,
Swift at the call of bugle and of drum,

So at the voice of Peace, imperative'
As bugle's call, shall heroes spring to live
For country and for thee. In every land,
In every age, men are what times demand."
Demand the best, O Peace, and teach thy sons
They need not rush in front of death-charged guns
With murder in their hearts to prove their worth.
The grandest heroes who have graced the earth
Were love-filled souls who did not seek the fray,
But chose the safe, hard, high, and lonely way
Of selfless labour for a suffering world.
Beneath our glorious flag again unfurled
In victory such heroes wait to be
Called into bloodless action, Peace, by thee.
Be thou insistent in thy stern demand,
And wise, great men shall rise up in the land.

PRESUMPTION

WHENEVER I am prone to doubt or wonder—
I check myself, and say, "That mighty One
Who made the solar system cannot blunder—
And for the best all things are being done."
Who set the stars on their eternal courses
Has fashioned this strange earth by some sure plan.
Bow low, bow low to those majestic forces,
Nor dare to doubt their wisdom, puny man.

You cannot put one little star in motion,
You cannot shape one single forest leaf,
Nor fling a mountain up, nor sink an ocean,
Presumptuous pigmy, large with unbelief.
You cannot bring one dawn of regal splendour,
Nor bid the day to shadowy twilight fall,
Nor send the pale moon forth with radiance tender—
And dare you doubt the One who has done all?

"So much is wrong, there is such pain—such sinning."
Yet look again—behold how much is right!
And He who formed the world from its beginning
Knows how to guide it upward to the light.
Your task, O man, is not to carp and cavil
At God's achievements, but with purpose strong
To cling to good, and turn away from evil.
That is the way to help the world along.

HIGH NOON

TIME'S finger on the dial of my life
Points to high noon! and yet the half-spent day
Leaves less than half remaining, for the dark,
Bleak shadows of the grave engulf the end.
To those who burn the candle to the stick,
The sputtering socket yields but little light.
Long life is sadder than an early death.
We cannot count on ravelled threads of age

Whereof to weave a fabric. We must use
The warp and woof the ready present yields
And toil while daylight lasts. When I bethink
How brief the past, the future, still more brief,
Calls on to action, action! Not for me
Is time for retrospection or for dreams,
Not time for self-laudation or remorse.
Have I done nobly? Then I must not let
Dead yesterday unborn to-morrow shame.
Have I done wrong? Well, let the bitter taste
Of fruit that turned to ashes on my lip
Be my reminder in temptation's hour,
And keep me silent when I would condemn.
Sometimes it takes the acid of a sin
To cleanse the clouded windows of our souls
So pity may shine through them.

Looking back,
My faults and errors seem like stepping-stones
That led the way to knowledge of the truth
And made me value virtue; sorrows shine
In rainbow colours o'er the gulf of years,
Where lie forgotten pleasures.

Looking forth,
Out to the western sky still bright with noon,
I feel well spurred and booted for the strife
That ends not till Nirvana is attained.

Battling with Fate, with men, and with myself,
Up the steep summit of my life's forenoon,

Three things I learned, three things of precious worth,
To guide and help me down the western slope.
I have learned how to pray, and toil, and save:
To pray for courage to receive what comes,
Knowing what comes to be divinely sent;
To toil for universal good, since thus
And only thus can good come unto me;
To save, by giving whatsoever I have
To those who have not—this alone is gain.

THOUGHT-MAGNETS

WITH each strong thought, with every earnest longing
For aught thou deemest needful to thy soul,
Invisible vast forces are set thronging
Between thee and that goal.

'Tis only when some hidden weakness alters
And changes thy desire, or makes it less,
That this mysterious army ever falters
Or stops short of success.

Thought is a magnet; and the longed-for pleasure,
Or boon, or aim, or object, is the steel;
And its attainment hangs but on the measure
Of what thy soul can feel.

SMILES

SMILE a little, smile a little,
As you go along,
Not alone when life is pleasant,
But when things go wrong.
Care delights to see you frowning,
Loves to hear you sigh;
Turn a smiling face upon her—
Quick the dame will fly.

Smile a little, smile a little,
All along the road;
Every life must have its burden,
Every heart its load.
Why sit down in gloom and darkness
With your grief to sup?
As you drink Fate's bitter tonic,
Smile across the cup.

Smile upon the troubled pilgrims
Whom you pass and meet;
Frowns are thorns, and smiles are blossoms
Oft for weary feet.
Do not make the way seem harder
By a sullen face;
Smile a little, smile a little,
Brighten up the place.

Smile upon your undone labour;
  Not for one who grieves
O'er his task waits wealth or glory;
  He who smiles achieves.
Though you meet with loss and sorrow
  In the passing years,
Smile a little, smile a little,
  Even through your tears.

THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY

MAN has explored all countries and all lands,
  And made his own the secrets of each clime.
  Now, ere the world has fully reached its prime,
The oval earth lies compassed with steel bands,
The seas are slaves to ships that touch all strands,
  And even the haughty elements, sublime
  And bold, yield him their secrets for all time,
And speed like lackeys forth at his commands.

Still, though he search from shore to distant shore,
  And no strange realms, no unlocated plains
Are left for his attainment and control,
Yet is there one more kingdom to explore.
  Go, know thyself, O man! there yet remains
The undiscovered country of thy soul!

THE UNIVERSAL ROUTE

AS we journey along, with a laugh and a song,
We see, on youth's flower-decked slope,
Like a beacon of light, shining fair on the sight,
The beautiful Station of Hope.

But the wheels of old Time roll along as we climb,
And our youth speeds away on the years;
And with hearts that are numb with life's sorrows we come
To the mist-covered Station of Tears.

Still onward we pass, where the milestones, alas!
Are the tombs of our dead, to the West,
Where glitters and gleams, in the dying sunbeams,
The sweet, silent Station of Rest.

All rest is but change, and no grave can estrange
The soul from its Parent above;
And, scorning the rod, it soars back to its God,
To the limitless City of Love.

UNANSWERED PRAYERS

LIKE some schoolmaster, kind in being stern,
Who hears the children crying o'er their slates
And calling, "Help me, master!" yet helps not,
Since in his silence and refusal lies
Their self-development, so God abides

Unheeding many prayers. He is not deaf
To any cry sent up from earnest hearts;
He hears and strengthens when he must deny.
He sees us weeping over life's hard sums;
But should He give the key and dry our tears,
What would it profit us when school were done
And not one lesson mastered?

What a world
Were this if all our prayers were answered. Not
In famed Pandora's box were such vast ills
As lie in human hearts. Should our desires,
Voiced one by one in prayer, ascend to God,
And come back as events shaped to our wish,
What chaos would result!

In my fierce youth
I sighed out breath enough to move a fleet,
Voicing wild prayers to heaven for fancied boons
Which were denied; and that denial bends
My knee to prayers of gratitude each day
Of my maturer years. Yet from those prayers
I rose always regirded for the strife
And conscious of new strength. Pray on, sad heart,
That which thou pleadest for may not be given,
But in the lofty altitude where souls
Who supplicate God's grace are lifted, there
Thou shalt find help to bear thy daily lot
Which is not elsewhere found.

THANKSGIVING

WE walk on starry fields of white
And do not see the daisies,
For blessings common in our sight
We rarely offer praises.
We sigh for some supreme delight
To crown our lives with splendour,
And quite ignore our daily store
Of pleasures sweet and tender.

Our cares are bold and push their way
Upon our thought and feeling ;
They hang about us all the day,
Our time from pleasure stealing.
So unobtrusive many a joy
We pass by and forget it,
But worry strives to own our lives
And conquers if we let it.

There's not a day in all the year
But holds some hidden pleasure,
And, looking back, joys oft appear
To brim the past's wide measure.
But blessings are like friends, I hold,
Who love and labour near us.
We ought to raise our notes of praise
While living hearts can hear us.

Full many a blessing wears the guise
Of worry or of trouble;
Far-seeing is the soul, and wise,
Who knows the mask is double.
But he who has the faith and strength
To thank his God for sorrow
Has found a joy without alloy
To gladden every morrow.

We ought to make the moments notes
Of happy, glad Thanksgiving;
The hours and days a silent phrase
Of music we are living.
And so the theme should swell and grow
As weeks and months pass o'er us,
And rise sublime at this good time,
A grand Thanksgiving chorus.

CONTRASTS

I SEE the tall church steeples—
They reach so far, so far;
But the eyes of my heart see the world's great mart
Where the starving people are.

I hear the church bells ringing
Their chimes on the morning air;
But my soul's sad ear is hurt to hear
The poor man's cry of despair.

Thicker and thicker the churches,
Nearer and nearer the sky—
But alack for their creeds while the poor man's needs
Grow deeper as years roll by!

THY SHIP

HADST thou a ship, in whose vast hold lay stored
The priceless riches of all climes and lands,
Say, wouldst thou let it float upon the seas
Unpiloted, of fickle winds the sport,
And of wild waves and hidden rocks the prey?

Thine is that ship; and in its depths concealed
Lies all the wealth of this vast universe—
Yea, lies some part of God's omnipotence,
The legacy divine of every soul.
Thy will, O man, thy will is that great ship,
And yet behold it drifting here and there—
One moment lying motionless in port,
Then on high seas by sudden impulse flung,
Then drying on the sands, and yet again
Sent forth on idle quests to no-man's land
To carry nothing and to nothing bring;
Till, worn and fretted by the aimless strife
And buffeted by vacillating winds,
It founders on a rock, or springs a leak,
With all its unused treasures in the hold.

Go save thy ship, thou sluggard; take the wheel
And steer to knowledge, glory, and success.
Great mariners have made the pathway plain
For thee to follow; hold thou to the course
Of Concentration Channel, and all things
Shall come in answer to thy swerveless wish
As comes the needle to the magnet's call,
Or sunlight to the prisoned blade of grass
That yearns all winter for the kiss of spring.

LIFE

ALL in the dark we grope along,
And if we go amiss
We learn at least which path is wrong,
And there is gain in this.

We do not always win the race
By only running right;
We have to tread the mountain's base
Before we reach its height.

The Christs alone no errors made;
So often had they trod
The paths that lead through light and shade,
They had become as God.

As Krishna, Buddha, Christ again,
They passed along the way,
And left those mighty truths which men
But dimly grasp to-day.

But he who loves himself the last
And knows the use of pain,
Though strewn with errors all his past,
He surely shall attain.

Some souls there are that needs must taste
Of wrong, ere choosing right;
We should not call those years a waste
Which led us to the light.

A MARINE ETCHING

A YACHT from its harbour ropes pulled free,
And leaped like a steed o'er the race-track blue,
Then up behind her the dust of the sea,
A gray fog, drifted, and hid her from view.

"LOVE THYSELF LAST"

LOVE thyself last. Look near, behold thy duty
To those who walk beside thee down life's road.
Make glad their days by little acts of beauty
And help them bear the burden of earth's load.

Love thyself last. Look far and find the stranger
Who staggers 'neath his sin and his despair;
Go, lend a hand, and lead him out of danger,
To heights where he may see the world is fair.

Love thyself last. The vastnesses above thee
Are filled with Spirit-Forces; strong and pure
And fervently these faithful friends shall love thee:
Keep thou thy watch o'er others and endure..

Love thyself last, and oh! such joy shall thrill thee
As never yet to selfish souls was given;
Whate'er thy lot, a perfect peace will fill thee,
And earth shall seem the ante-room of Heaven.

Love thyself last, and thou shalt grow in spirit
To see, to hear, to know, and understand.
The message of the stars, lo, thou shalt hear it,
And all God's joys shall be at thy command.

CHRISTMAS FANCIES

WHEN Christmas bells are swinging above the fields of snow,
We hear sweet voices ringing from lands of long ago,
And etched on vacant places
Are half-forgotten faces
Of friends we used to cherish, and loves we used to know—
When Christmas bells are swinging above the fields of snow.

Uprising from the ocean of the present surging near,
We see, with strange emotion, that is not free from fear,

That continent Elysian
Long vanished from our vision,
Youth's lovely lost Atlantis, so mourned for and so dear,
Uprising from the ocean of the present surging near.

When gloomy, gray Decembers are roused to Christmas mirth,
The dullest life remembers there once was joy on earth,
And draws from youth's recesses
Some memory it possesses,
And, gazing through the lens of time, exaggerates its worth,
When gloomy, gray December is roused to Christmas mirth.

When hanging up the holly or mistletoe, I wis
Each heart recalls some folly that lit the world with bliss.
Not all the seers and sages
With wisdom of the ages
Can give the mind such pleasure as memories of that kiss
When hanging up the holly or mistletoe, I wis.

For life was made for loving, and love alone repays,
As passing years are proving, for all of Time's sad ways.
There lies a sting in pleasure,
And fame gives shallow measure,
And wealth is but a phantom that mocks the restless days,
For life was made for loving, and only loving pays.

When Christmas bells are pelting the air with silver
chimes,
And silences are melting to soft, melodious rhymes,
Let Love, the world's beginning,
End fear and hate and sinning;
Let Love, the God Eternal, be worshipped in all climes
When Christmas bells are pelting the air with silver
chimes.

THE RIVER

I AM a river flowing from God's sea
Through devious ways. He mapped my course
for me;
I cannot change it; mine alone the toil
To keep the waters free from grime and soil.
The winding river ends where it began;
And when my life has compassed its brief span
I must return to that mysterious source.
So let me gather daily on my course
The perfume from the blossoms as I pass,
Balm from the pines, and healing from the grass,
And carry down my current as I go
Not common stones but precious gems to show;
And tears (the holy water from sad eyes)
Back to God's sea, from which all rivers rise,
Let me convey, not blood from wounded hearts,
Nor poison which the upas tree imparts.

When over flowery vales I leap with joy,
Let me not devastate them, nor destroy,
But rather leave them fairer to the sight;
Mine be the lot to comfort and delight.
And if down awful chasms I needs must leap,
Let me not murmur at my lot, but sweep
On bravely to the end without one fear,
Knowing that He who planned my ways stands near.
Love sent me forth, to Love I go again,
For Love is all, and over all. Amen.

SORRY

THERE is much that makes me sorry as I journey down life's way,
And I seem to see more pathos in poor human lives each day.
I'm sorry for the strong, brave men who shield the weak from harm,
But who, in their own troubled hours, find no protecting arm.

I'm sorry for the victors who have reached success, to stand
As targets for the arrows shot by envious failure's hand.
I'm sorry for the generous hearts who freely shared their wine,
But drink alone the gall of tears in fortune's drear decline.

I'm sorry for the souls who build their own fame's
funeral pyre,
Derided by the scornful throng like ice deriding fire.
I'm sorry for the conquering ones who know not sin's
defeat,
But daily tread down fierce desire 'neath scorched and
bleeding feet.

I'm sorry for the anguished hearts that break with
passion's strain,
But I'm sorrier for the poor starved souls that never
knew love's pain,
Who hunger on through barren years not tasting joys
they crave,
For sadder far is such a lot than weeping o'er a grave.

I'm sorry for the souls that come unwelcomed into birth,
I'm sorry for the unloved old who cumber up the earth,
I'm sorry for the suffering poor in life's great maelstrom
hurled—
In truth, I'm sorry for them all who make this aching
world.

But underneath whate'er seems sad and is not understood,
I know there lies hid from our sight a mighty germ of
good.
And this belief stands firm by me, my sermon, motto,
text—
The sorriest things in this life will seem grandest in the
next.

AMBITION'S TRAIL

IF all the end of this continuous striving
Were simply *to attain*,
How poor would seem the planning and contriving,
The endless urging and the hurried driving,
Of body, heart, and brain!

But ever in the wake of true achieving
There shines this glowing trail—
Some other soul will be spurred on, conceiving
New strength and hope, in its own power believing,
Because *thou* didst not fail.

Not thine alone the glory, nor the sorrow,
If thou dost miss the goal;
Undreamed of lives in many a far to-morrow
From thee their weakness or their force shall borrow—
On, on, ambitious soul.

UNCONTROLLED

THE mighty forces of mysterious space
Are one by one subdued by lordly man.
The awful lightning that for eons ran
Their devastating and untrammelled race,
Now bear his messages from place to place
Like carrier doves. The winds lead on his van;
The lawless elements no longer can
Resist his strength, but yield with sullen grace

His bold feet scaling heights before untrod,
Light, darkness, air and water, heat and cold,
He bids go forth and bring him power and pelf.
And yet, though ruler, king, and demi-god,
He walks with his fierce passions uncontrolled,
The conqueror of all things—save himself.

WILL

YOU will be what you will to be
Let failure find its false content
In that poor word "environment,"
But spirit scorns it, and is free.

It masters time, it conquers space,
It cowes that boastful trickster Chance,
And bids the tyrant Circumstance
Uncrown and fill a servant's place.

The human Will, that force unseen,
The offspring of a deathless Soul,
Can hew the way to any goal,
Though walls of granite intervene.

Be not impatient in delay,
But wait as one who understands;
When spirit rises and commands,
The gods are ready to obey.

The river seeking for the sea
Confronts the dam and precipice,
Yet knows it cannot fail or miss;
You will be what you will to be!

TO AN ASTROLOGER

NAY, seer, I do not doubt thy mystic lore,
Nor question that the tenor of my life,
Past, present, and the future, is revealed
There in my horoscope. I do believe
That yon dead moon compels the haughty seas
To ebb and flow, and that my natal star
Stands like a stern-browed sentinel in space
And challenges events; nor lets one grief,
Or joy, or failure, or success, pass on
To mar or bless my earthly lot, until
It proves its Karmic right to come to me.

All this I grant, but more than this I *know!*
Before the solar systems were conceived,
When nothing was but the unnamable,
My spirit lived, an atom of the Cause.
Through countless ages and in many forms
It has existed, ere it entered in
This human frame to serve its little day
Upon the earth. The deathless Me of me,

The spark from that great all-creative fire,
Is part of that eternal source called God,
And mightier than the universe.

Why, he
Who knows, and knowing, never once forgets
The pedigree divine of his own soul,
Can conquer, shape, and govern destiny,
And use vast space as 'twere a board for chess
With stars for pawns; can change his horoscope
To suit his will; turn failure to success,
And from preordained sorrows, harvest joy.

There is no puny planet, sun, or moon,
Or zodiacal sign which can control
The God in us! If we bring *that* to bear
Upon events, we mould them to our wish;
'Tis when the infinite 'neath the finite gropes
That men are governed by their horoscopes.

THE TENDRIL'S FATE

UNDER the snow, in the dark and the cold,
A pale little sprout was humming;
Sweetly it sang, 'neath the frozen mould,
Of the beautiful days that were coming.

"How foolish your songs!" said a lump of clay;
"What is there, I ask, to prove them?
Just look at the walls between you and the day,
Now, have you the strength to move them?"

But under the ice and under the snow
 The pale little sprout kept singing,
"I cannot tell how, but I know, I know,
 I know what the days are bringing.

"Birds, and blossoms, and buzzing bees,
 Blue, blue skies above me,
Bloom on the meadows and buds on the trees
 And the great glad sun to love me."

A pebble spoke next: "You are quite absurd,"
 It said, "with your song's insistence;
For *I* never saw a tree or a bird,
 So of course there are none in existence."

"But I know, I know," the tendril cried,
 In beautiful sweet unreason;
Till lo! from its prison, glorified,
 It burst in the glad spring season.

THE TIMES

THE times are not degenerate. Man's faith
 Mounts higher than of old. No crumbling creed
Can take from the immortal soul the need
 Of that supreme Creator, God. The wraith
Of dead beliefs we cherished in our youth
Fades but to let us welcome new-born Truth

Man may not worship at the ancient shrine
Prone on his face, in self-accusing scorn.
That night is past. He hails a fairer morn,
And knows himself a something all divine;
Not humble worm whose heritage is sin,
But born of God, he feels the Christ within.

Not loud his prayers, as in the olden time,
But deep his reverence for that mighty force,
That occult working of the great All-Source,
Which makes the present era so sublime.
Religion now means something high and broad,
And man stood never half so near to God.

THE QUESTION

BESIDE us in our seeking after pleasures,
Through all our restless striving after fame,
Through all our search for worldly gains and treasures,
There walketh one whom no man likes to name.
Silent he follows, veiled of form and feature,
Indifferent if we sorrow or rejoice,
Yet that day comes when every living creature
Must look upon his face and hear his voice.

When that day comes to you, and Death, unmasking,
Shall bar your path, and say, "Behold the end,"
What are the questions that he will be asking
About your past? Have you considered, friend?

I think he will not chide you for your sinning,
Nor for your creeds or dogmas will he care;
He will but ask, "*From your life's first beginning*
How many burdens have you helped to bear?"

SORROW'S USES

THE uses of sorrow I comprehend
Better and better at each year's end.

Deeper and deeper I seem to see
Why and wherefore it has to be.

Only after the dark, wet days
Do we fully rejoice in the sun's bright rays.

Sweeter the crust tastes after the fast
Than the sated gourmand's finest repast.

The faintest cheer sounds never amiss
To the actor who once has heard a hiss.

To one who the sadness of freedom knows,
Light seem the fetters love may impose.

And he who has dwelt with his heart alone,
Hears all the music in friendship's tone.

So better and better I comprehend
How sorrow ever would be our friend.

IF

TWIXT what thou art, and what thou wouldst be, let
No "If" arise on which to lay the blame.
Man makes a mountain of that puny word,
But, like a blade of grass before the scythe,
It falls and withers when a human will,
Stirred by creative force, sweeps toward its aim.

Thou wilt be what thou couldst be. Circumstance
Is but the toy of genius. When a soul
Burns with a god-like purpose to achieve,
All obstacles between it and its goal
Must vanish as the dew before the sun.

"If" is the motto of the dilettante
And idle dreamer; 'tis the poor excuse
Of mediocrity. The truly great
Know not the word, or know it but to scorn,
Else had Joan of Arc a peasant died,
Uncrowned by glory and by men unsung.

WHICH ARE YOU?

THERE are two kinds of people on earth to-day;
Just two kinds of people, no more, I say.

Not the sinner and saint, for it's well understood
The good are half bad, and the bad are half good.

Not the rich and the poor, for to rate a man's wealth
You must first know the state of his conscience and
health.

Not the humble and proud, for, in life's little span,
Who puts on vain airs is not counted a man.

Not the happy and sad, for the swift flying years
Brings each man his laughter, and each man his tears.

No; the two kinds of people on earth I mean,
Are the people who lift and the people who lean.

Wherever you go, you will find the earth's masses
Are always divided in just these two classes.

And, oddly enough, you will find too, I ween,
There's only one lifter to twenty who lean.

In which class are you? Are you easing the load
Of overtaxed lifters, who toil down the road?

Or are you a leaner, who lets others share
Your portion of labour and worry and care?

THE CREED TO BE

OUR thoughts are moulding unmade spheres,
And, like a blessing or a curse,
They thunder down the formless years,
And ring throughout the universe.

We build our futures by the shape
Of our desires, and not by acts.
There is no pathway of escape;
No priest-made creeds can alter facts.

Salvation is not begged or bought,
Too long this selfish hope sufficed;
Too long man reeked with lawless thought,
And leaned upon a tortured Christ.

Like shrivelled leaves, these worn-out creeds
Are dropping from Religion's tree;
The world begins to know its needs,
And souls are crying to be free.

Free from the load of fear and grief,
Man fashioned in an ignorant age;
Free from the ache of unbelief
He fled to in rebellious rage.

No church can bind him to the things
That fed the first crude souls, evolved;
For, mounting up on daring wings,
He questions mysteries all unsolved.

Above the chant of priests, above
The blatant voice of braying doubt,
He hears the still, small voice of Love,
Which sends its simple message out.

And clearer, sweeter, day by day
Its mandate echoes from the skies,
"Go roll the stone of self away,
And let the Christ within thee rise."

INSPIRATION

NOT like a daring, bold, aggressive boy,
Is inspiration, eager to pursue,
But rather like a maiden, fond, yet coy,
Who gives herself to him who best doth woo.

Once she may smile, or thrice, thy soul to fire,
In passing by, but when she turns her face,
Thou must persist and seek her with desire,
If thou wouldst win the favour of her grace.

And if, like some winged bird, she cleaves the air,
And leaves thee spent and stricken on the earth,
Still must thou strive to follow even there,
That she may know thy valour and thy worth.

Then shall she come unveiling all her charms,
Giving thee joy for pain, and smiles for tears;
Then shalt thou clasp her with possessing arms,
The while she murmurs music in thine ears.

But ere her kiss has faded from thy cheek,
She shall flee from thee over hill and glade,
So must thou seek and ever seek and seek
For each new conquest of this phantom maid.

THE WISH

SHOULD some great angel say to me to-morrow,
"Thou must retread thy pathway from the start,
But God will grant, in pity, for thy sorrow,
Some one dear wish, the nearest to thy heart."

This were my wish!—from my life's dim beginning
Let be what has been! wisdom planned the whole;
My want, my woe, my errors, and my sinning,
All, all were needed lessons for my soul.

THREE FRIENDS

OF all the blessings which my life has known,
I value most, and most praise God for three:
Want, Loneliness, and Pain, those comrades true,

Who masqueraded in the garb of foes
For many a year, and filled my heart with dread.
Yet fickle joys, like false, pretentious friends,
Have proved less worthy than this trio. First,

Want taught me labour, led me up the steep
And toilsome paths to hills of pure delight,
Trod only by the feet that know fatigue,
And yet press on until the heights appear.

Then loneliness and hunger of the heart
Sent me upreaching to the realms of space.
Till all the silences grew eloquent,
And all their loving forces hailed me friend.

Last, pain taught prayer! placed in my hand the staff
Of close communion with the over-soul,
That I might lean upon it to the end,
And find myself made strong for any strife.

And then these three who had pursued my steps
Like stern, relentless foes, year after year,
Unmasked, and turned their faces full on me,
And lo! they were divinely beautiful,
For through them shone the lustrous eyes of Love.

YOU NEVER CAN TELL

YOU never can tell when you send a word,
Like an arrow shot from a bow
By an archer blind, be it cruel or kind,
Just where it may chance to go.
It may pierce the breast of your dearest friend,
Tipped with its poison or balm;
To a stranger's heart in life's great mart,
It may carry its pain or its calm.

You never can tell when you do an act
Just what the result will be;
But with every deed you are sowing a seed,
Though the harvest you may not see.
Each kindly act is an acorn dropped
In God's productive soil.
You may not know, but the tree shall grow,
With shelter for those who toil.

You never can tell what your thoughts will do,
In bringing you hate or love;
For thoughts are things, and their airy wings
Are swifter than carrier doves.
They follow the law of the universe—
Each thing must create its kind;
And they speed o'er the track to bring you back
Whatever went out from your mind.

HERE AND NOW

HERE, in the heart of the world,
Here, in the noise and the din,
Here, where our spirits were hurled
To battle with sorrow and sin,
This is the place and the spot
For knowledge of infinite things;
This is the kingdom where Thought
Can conquer the prowess of kings.

Wait for no heavenly life,
Seek for no temple alone;
Here, in the midst of the strife,
Know what the sages have known.
See what the Perfect Ones saw—
God in the depth of each soul,
God as the light and the law,
God as beginning and goal.

Earth is one chamber of Heaven,
Death is no grander than birth.
Joy in the life that was given,
Strive for perfection on earth;
Here, in the turmoil and roar,
Show what it is to be calm;
Show how the spirit can soar
And bring back its healing and balm.

Stand not aloof nor apart,
Plunge in the thick of the fight;
There, in the street and the mart,
That is the place to do right.
Not in some cloister or cave,
Not in some kingdom above,
Here, on this side of the grave,
Here, should we labour and love.

UNCONQUERED

HOWEVER skilled and strong art thou, my foe,
However fierce is thy relentless hate,
Though firm thy hand, and strong thy aim, and straight
Thy poisoned arrow leaves the bended bow,
To pierce the target of my heart, ah! know
I am the master yet of my own fate.
Thou canst not rob me of my best estate,
Though fortune, fame, and friends, yea, love shall go.

Not to the dust shall my true self be hurled,
Nor shall I meet thy worst assaults dismayed;
When all things in the balance are well weighed.
There is but one great danger in the world—
Thou canst not force my soul to wish thee ill,
That is the only evil that can kill.

ALL THAT LOVE ASKS

"ALL that I ask," says Love, "is just to stand
And gaze, unchided, deep in thy dear eyes;
For in their depths lies largest Paradise.
Yet, if perchance one pressure of thy hand
Be granted me, then joy I thought complete
Were still more sweet.

"All that I ask," says Love, "all that I ask,
Is just thy hand-clasp. Could I brush thy cheek
As zephyrs brush a rose leaf, words are weak
To tell the bliss in which my soul would bask.
There is no language but would desecrate
A joy so great.

"All that I ask, is just one tender touch
Of that soft cheek. Thy pulsing palm in mine,
Thy dark eyes lifted in a trust divine,
And those curled lips that tempt me overmuch
Turned where I may not seize the supreme bliss
Of one mad kiss.

"All that I ask," says Love, "of life, of death,
Or of high heaven itself, is just to stand,
Glance melting into glance, hand twined in hand,
The while I drink the nectar of thy breath
In one sweet kiss, but one, of all thy store,
I ask no more."

"All that I ask"—nay, self-deceiving Love,
Reverse thy phrase, so thus the words may fall,
In place of "all I ask," say, "I ask all,"
All that pertains to earth or soars above,
All that thou wert, art, will be, body, soul,
Love asks the whole.

"DOES IT PAY?"

IF one poor burdened toiler o'er life's road,
Who meets us by the way,
Goes on less conscious of his galling load,
Then life, indeed, does pay.

If we can show one troubled heart the gain
That lies alway in loss,
Why, then, we too are paid for all the pain
Of bearing life's hard cross.

If some despondent soul to hope is stirred,
Some sad lip made to smile,
By any act of ours, or any word,
Then, life has been worth while.

SESTINA

I WANDERED o'er the vast green plains of youth,
And searched for Pleasure. On a distant height
Fame's silhouette stood sharp against the skies.
Beyond vast crowds that thronged a broad highway
I caught the glimmer of a golden goal,
While from a blooming bower smiled siren Love.

Straight gazing in her eyes, I laughed at Love
With all the haughty insolence of youth,
As past her bower I strode to seek my goal.
"Now will I climb to glory's dizzy height,"
I said, "for there above the common way
Doth pleasure dwell companioned by the skies."

But when I reached that summit near the skies,
So far from man I seemed, so far from Love—
"Not here," I cried, "doth Pleasure find her way,"
Seen from the distant borderland of youth,
Fame smiles upon us from her sun-kissed height,
But frowns in shadows when we reach the goal.

Then were mine eyes fixed on that glittering goal,
Dear to all sense—sunk souls beneath the skies.
Gold tempts the artist from the lofty height,
Gold lures the maiden from the arms of Love,
Gold buys the fresh, ingenuous heart of youth,
"And gold," I said, "will show me Pleasure's way."

But ah! the soil and discord of that way,
Where savage hordes rushed headlong to the goal,
Dead to the best impulses of their youth,
Blind to the azure beauty of the skies;
Dulled to the voice of conscience and of love,
They wandered far from Truth's eternal height.

Then Truth spoke to me from that noble height,
Saying, "Thou didst pass Pleasure on the way,
She with the yearning eyes so full of Love,
Whom thou disdained to seek for glory's goal.
Two blending paths beneath God's arching skies
Lead straight to Pleasure. Ah! blind heart of youth,
Not up fame's height, not toward the base god's goal,
Doth Pleasure make her way, but 'neath calm skies
Where Duty walks with Love in endless youth."

THE OPTIMIST

THE fields were bleak and sodden.
Not a wing
Or note enlivened the depressing wood;
A soiled and sullen, stubborn snowdrift stood
Beside the roadway. Winds came muttering
Of storms to be, and brought the chilly sting
Of icebergs in their breath. Stalled cattle mooed
Forth plaintive pleadings for the earth's green food.
No gleam; no hint of hope in anything.

The sky was blank and ashen, like the face
Of some poor wretch who drains life's cup too fast.
Yet, swaying to and fro, as if to fling
About chilled Nature its lithe arms of grace,
Smiling with promise in the wintry blast,
The optimistic Willow spoke of spring.

THE PESSIMIST

THE pessimistic locust, last to leaf,
Though all the world is glad, still talks of grief.

AN INSPIRATION

HOWEVER the battle is ended,
Though proudly the victor comes
With fluttering flags and prancing nags
And echoing roll of drums,
Still truth proclaims this motto
In letters of living light,—
No question is ever settled
Until it is settled right.

Though the heel of the strong oppressor
May grind the weak in the dust,
And the voices of fame with one acclaim
May call him great and just,

Let those who applaud take warning,
And keep this motto in sight,—
No question is ever settled
Until it is settled right.

Let those who have failed take courage;
Though the enemy seems to have won,
Though his ranks are strong, if he be in the wrong
The battle is not yet done;
For, sure as the morning follows
The darkest hour of the night,
No question is ever settled
Until it is settled right.

Old man bowed down with labour!
Old woman young, yet old!
O heart oppressed in the toiler's breast
And crushed by the power of gold!
Keep on with your weary battle
Against triumphant might;
No question is ever settled
Until it is settled right.

LIFE'S HARMONIES

LET no man pray that he know not sorrow,
Let no soul ask to be free from pain,
For the gall of to-day is the sweet of to-morrow,
And the moment's loss is the lifetime's gain.

Through want of a thing does its worth redouble,
Through hunger's pangs does the feast content,
And only the heart that has harboured trouble
Can fully rejoice when joy is sent.

Let no man shrink from the bitter tonics
Of grief, and yearning, and need, and strife,
For the rarest chords in the soul's harmonics
Are found in the minor strains of life.

PREPARATION

WE must not force events, but rather make
The heart-soil ready for their coming, as
The earth spreads carpets for the feet of Spring,
Or, with the strengthening tonic of the frost,
Prepares for winter. Should a July noon
Burst suddenly upon a frozen world
Small joy would follow, even though that world
Were longing for the Summer. Should the sting
Of sharp December pierce the heart of June,
What death and devastation would ensue!
All things are planned. The most majestic sphere
That whirls through space is governed and controlled
By supreme law, as is the blade of grass
Which through the bursting bosom of the earth
Creeps up to kiss the light. Poor, puny man
Alone doth strive and battle with the Force
Which rules all lives and worlds, and he alone
Demands effect before producing cause.

How vain the hope! We cannot harvest joy
Until we sow the seed, and God alone
Knows when that seed has ripened. Oft we stand
And watch the ground with anxious, brooding eyes,
Complaining of the slow, unfruitful yield,
Not knowing that the shadow of ourselves
Keeps off the sunlight and delays result.
Sometimes our fierce impatience of desire
Doth like a sultry May force tender shoots
Of half-formed pleasures and unshaped events
To ripen prematurely, and we reap
But disappointment; or we rot the germs
With briny tears ere they have time to grow.
While stars are born and mighty planets die
And hissing comets scorch the brow of space,
The Universe keeps its eternal calm.
Through patient preparation, year on year,
The earth endures the travail of the Spring
And Winter's desolation. So our souls
In grand submission to a higher law
Should move serene through all the ills of life,
Believing them masked joys.

GETHSEMANE

IN golden youth when seems the earth
A Summer-land of singing mirth,
When souls are glad and hearts are light,
And not a shadow lurks in sight,

We do not know it, but there lies
Somewhere veiled under evening skie
A garden which we all must see—
The garden of Gethsemane.

With joyous steps we go our ways,
Love lends a halo to our days;
Light sorrows sail like clouds afar,
We laugh, and say how strong we are.
We hurry on; and hurrying, go
Close to the borderland of woe
That waits for you, and waits for me—
Forever waits Gethsemane.

Down shadowy lanes, across strange streams,
Bridged over by our broken dreams;
Behind the misty caps of years,
Beyond the great salt fount of tears,
The garden lies. Strive as you may,
You cannot miss it in your way;
All paths that have been, or shall be,
Pass somewhere through Gethsemane.

All those who journey, soon or late,
Must pass within the garden's gate;
Must kneel alone in darkness there,
And battle with some fierce despair.
God pity those who cannot say,
"Not mine but Thine"; who only pray,
"Let this cup pass," and cannot see
The *purpose* in Gethsemane.

GOD'S MEASURE

GOD measures souls by their capacity
For entertaining his best Angel, Love.
Who loveth most is nearest kin to God,
Who is all Love, or Nothing.
He who sits
And looks out on the palpitating world,
And feels his heart swell in him large enough
To hold all men within it, he is near
His great Creator's standard, though he dwells
Outside the pale of churches, and knows not
A feast-day from a fast-day, or a line
Of Scripture even. What God wants of us
Is that outreaching bigness that ignores
All littleness of aims, or loves, or creeds,
And clasps all Earth and Heaven in its embrace.

NOBLESSE OBLIGE

I HOLD it the duty of one who is gifted
And specially dowered in all men's sight,
To know no rest till his life is lifted
Fully up to his great gifts' height.

He must mould the man into rare completeness,
For gems are set only in gold refined.
He must fashion his thoughts into perfect sweetness,
And cast out folly and pride from his mind.

For he who drinks from a god's gold fountain
Of art or music or rhythmic song
Must sift from his soul the chaff of malice,
And weed from his heart the roots of wrong.

Great gifts should be worn, like a crown befitting,
And not like gems in a beggar's hands!
And the toil must be constant and unremitting
Which lifts up the king to the crown's demands.

THROUGH TEARS

AN artist toiled over his pictures;
He laboured by night and by day,
He struggled for glory and honour
But the world, it had nothing to say.
His walls were ablaze with the splendours
We see in the beautiful skies;
But the world beheld only the colours
That were made out of chemical dyes.

Time sped. And he lived, loved, and suffered;
He passed through the valley of grief.
Again he toiled over his canvas,
Since in labour alone was relief.
It showed not the splendour of colours
Of those of his earlier years;
But the world? the world bowed down before it
Because it was painted with tears.

A poet was gifted with genius,
And he sang, and he sang all the days.
He wrote for the praise of the people,
But the people accorded no praise.
Oh! his songs were as blithe as the morning,
As sweet as the music of birds;
But the world had no homage to offer,
Because they were nothing but words.

Time sped. And the poet through sorrow
Became like his suffering kind.
Again he toiled over his poems
To lighten the grief of his mind.
They were not so flowing and rhythmic
As those of his earlier years;
But the world? lo! it offered its homage,
Because they were written in tears.

So ever the price must be given
By those seeking glory in art;
So ever the world is repaying
The grief-stricken, suffering heart.
The happy must ever be humble;
Ambition must wait for the years
Ere hoping to win the approval
Of a world that looks on through its tears.

WHAT WE NEED

WHAT does our country need? No armies standing
With sabres gleaming ready for the fight;
Not increased navies, skilful and commanding,
To bound the waters with an iron might;
Not haughty men with glutted purses trying
To purchase souls, and keep the power of place;
Not jewelled dolls with one another vying
For palms of beauty, elegance, and grace.

But we want women, strong of soul, yet lowly,
With that rare meekness, born of gentleness;
Women whose lives are pure and clean and holy,
The women whom all little children bless;
Brave, earnest women, helpful to each other,
With finest scorn for all things low and mean;
Women who hold the names of wife and mother
Far nobler than the title of a queen.

Oh! these are they who mould the men of story,
These mothers, ofttimes shorn of grace and youth,
Who, worn and weary, ask no greater glory
Than making some young soul the home of truth;
Who sow in hearts all fallow for the sowing
The seeds of virtue and of scorn for sin,
And, patient, watch the beauteous harvest growing
And weed out tares which crafty hands cast in;

Women who do not hold the gift of beauty
As some rare treasure to be bought and sold,
But guard it as a precious aid to duty—
The outer framing of the inner gold;
Women who, low above their cradles bending,
Let flattery's voice go by, and give no heed,
While their pure prayers like incense are ascending;
These are our country's pride, our country's need.

PLEA TO SCIENCE

O SCIENCE, reaching backward through the distance,
Most earnest child of God,
Exposing all the secrets of existence,
With thy divining rod,
I bid thee speed up to the heights supernal,
Clear thinker, ne'er sufficed;
Go seek and bind the laws and truths eternal,
But leave me Christ.

Upon the vanity of pious sages
Let in the light of day;
Break down the superstitions of all ages—
Thrust bigotry away;
Stride on, and bid all stubborn foes defiance,
Let Truth and Reason reign:
But I beseech thee, O Immortal Science,
Let Christ remain.

What canst thou give to help me bear my crosses,
In place of Him, my Lord?
And what to recompense for all my losses,
And bring me sweet reward?
Thou couldst not with thy clear, cold eyes of reason,
Thou couldst not comfort me
Like One who passed through that tear-blotted season
In sad Gethsemane!

Through all the weary, wearing hour of sorrow,
What word that thou hast said
Would make me strong to wait for some to-morrow
When I should find my dead?
When I am weak, and desolate, and lonely—
And prone to follow wrong?
Not thou, O Science—Christ, my Saviour, only
Can make me strong.

Thou art so cold, so lofty, and so distant,
Though great my need might be,
No prayer, however constant and persistent,
Could bring thee down to me.
Christ stands so near, to help me through each hour,
To guide me day by day
O Science, sweeping all before thy power—
Leave Christ, I pray!

RESPITE

THE mighty conflict, which we call existence,
Doth wear upon the body and the soul,
Our vital forces wasted in resistance,
So much there is to conquer and control.

The rock which meets the billows with defiance,
Undaunted and unshaken day by day,
In spite of its unyielding self-reliance,
Is by the warfare surely worn away.

And there are depths and heights of strong emotions
That surge at times within the human breast,
More fierce than all the tides of all the oceans
Which sweep on ever in divine unrest.

I sometimes think the rock worn with adventures,
And sad with thoughts of conflicts yet to be,
Must envy the frail reed which no one censures,
When, overcome, 'tis swallowed by the sea.

This life is all resistance and repression.
Dear God, if in that other world unseen,
Not rest we find, but new life and progression,
Grant us a respite in the grave between.

SONG

O PRAISE me not with your lips, dear one !
 Though your tender words I prize.
But dearer by far is the soulful gaze
 Of your eyes, your beautiful eyes,
 Your tender, loving eyes.

O chide me not with your lips, dear one !
 Though I cause your bosom sighs.
You can make repentance deeper far
 By your sad, reproving eyes,
 Your sorrowful, troubled eyes.

Words, at the best, are but hollow sounds ;
 Above, in the beaming skies,
The constant stars say never a word,
 But only smile with their eyes—
 Smile on with their lustrous eyes.

Then breathe no vow with your lips, dear one ·
 On the wingèd wind speech flies.
But I read the truth of your noble heart
 In your soulful, speaking eyes—
 In your deep and beautiful eyes.

MY SHIPS

IF all the ships I have at sea
Should come a-sailing home to me,
Ah, well! the harbour could not hold
So many sails as there would be
If all my ships came in from sea.

If half my ships came home from sea,
And brought their precious freight to me,
Ah, well! I should have wealth as great
As any king who sits in state—
So rich the treasures that would be
In half my ships now out at sea.

If just one ship I have at sea
Should come a-sailing home to me,
Ah, well! the storm-clouds then might frown;
For if the others all went down,
Still rich and proud and glad I'd be
If that one ship came back to me.

If that one ship went down at sea
And all the others came to me,
Weighed down with gems and wealth untold,
With glory, honours, riches, gold,
The poorest soul on earth I'd be
If that one ship came not to me.

O skies, be calm! O winds, blow free—
Blow all my ships safe home to me!

But if thou sendest some a-wrack,
To never more come sailing back,
Send any—all that skim the sea,
But bring my love-ship home to me.

HER LOVE

THE sands upon the ocean side
That change about with every tide,
And never true to one abide,
A women's love I liken to.

The summer zephyrs, light and vain,
That sing the same alluring strain
To every grass blade on the plain—
A woman's love is nothing more.

The sunshine of an April day
That comes to warm you with its ray,
But while you smile has flown away—
A woman's love is like to this.

God made poor woman with no heart,
But gave her skill, and tact, and art,
And so she lives, and plays her part.
We must not blame but pity her.

She leans to man—but just to hear
The praise he whispers in her ear;
Herself, not him, she holdeth dear—
O fool! to be deceived by her.

To sate her selfish thirst she quaffs
The love of strong hearts in sweet draughts,
Then throws them lightly by and laughs,
Too weak to understand their pain.

As changeful as the winds that blow
From every region to and fro,
Devoid of heart, she cannot know
The suffering of a human heart.

DEAR love, if you and I could sail away,
With snowy pennons to the winds unfurled,
Across the waters of some unknown bay,
And find some island far from all the world;

If we could dwell there, evermore alone,
While unrecorded years slip by apace,
Forgetting and forgotten and unknown
By aught save native song-birds of the place;

If Winter never visited that land,
And Summer's lap spilled o'er with fruits and flowers,
And tropic trees cast shade on every hand,
And twined boughs formed sleep-inviting bowers;

If from the fashions of the world set free,
And hid away from all its jealous strife,
I lived alone for you, and you for me—
Ah! then, dear love, how sweet were wedded life.

But since we dwell here in the crowded way,
Where hurrying throngs rush by to seek for gold,
And all is commonplace and work-a-day
As soon as love's young honeymoon grows old;

Since fashion rules and nature yields to art,
And life is hurt by daily jar and fret,
'Tis best to shut such dreams down in the heart
And go our ways alone, love, and forget.

LOVE'S BURIAL

LET us clear a little space,
And make Love a burial-place.

He is dead, dear, as you see,
And he wearies you and me.

Growing heavier, day by day,
Let us bury him, I say.

Wings of dead white butterflies,
These shall shroud him, as he lies

In his casket rich and rare,
Made of finest maiden-hair.

With the pollen of the rose
Let us his white eyelids close.

Put the rose thorn in his hand,
Shorn of leaves—you understand.

Let some holy water fall
On his dead face, tears of gall—

As we kneel to him and say,
"Dreams to dreams," and turn away.

Those gravediggers, Doubt, Distrust,
They will lower him to the dust.

Let us part here with a kiss—
You go that way, I go this.

Since we buried Love to-day
We will walk a separate way.

"LOVE IS ENOUGH"

LOVE is enough. Let us not ask for gold.
Wealth breeds false aims, and pride, and selfishness;
In those serene, Arcadian days of old
Men gave no thought to princely homes and dress.
The gods who dwelt on fair Olympia's height
Lived only for dear love and love's delight.
Love is enough.

Love is enough. Why should we care for fame?
Ambition is a most unpleasant guest:
It lures us with the glory of a name.
Far from the happy haunts of peace and rest.
Let us stay here in this secluded place
Made beautiful by love's endearing grace!
Love is enough.

Love is enough. Why should we strive for power?
It brings men only envy and distrust.
The poor world's homage pleases but an hour,
And earthly honours vanish in the dust.
The grandest lives are ofttimes desolate;
Let me be loved, and let who will be great.
Love is enough.

Love is enough. Why should we ask for more?
What greater gift have gods vouchsafed to men?
What better boon of all their precious store
Than our fond hearts that love and love again?
Old love may die; new love is just as sweet;
And life is fair and all the world complete:
Love is enough!

LIFE IS A PRIVILEGE

LIFE is a privilege. Its youthful days
Shine with the radiance of continuous Mays.
To live, to breathe, to wonder and desire,
To feed with dreams the heart's perpetual fire,
To thrill with virtuous passions, and to glow
With great ambitions—in one hour to know
The depths and heights of feeling—God! in truth,
How beautiful, how beautiful is youth!

Life is a privilege. Like some rare rose
The mysteries of the human mind unclose.

What marvels lie in earth, and air, and sea!
What stores of knowledge wait our opening key!
What sunny roads of happiness lead out
Beyond the realms of indolence and doubt!
And what large pleasures smile upon and bless
The busy avenues of usefulness!

Life is a privilege. Though noontide fades
And shadows fall along the winding glades,
Though joy-blooms wither in the autumn air,
Yet the sweet scent of sympathy is there.
Pale sorrow leads us closer to our kind,
And in the serious hours of life we find
Depths in the souls of men which lend new worth
And majesty to this brief span of earth.

Life is a privilege. If some sad fate
Sends us alone to seek the exit gate,
If men forsake us and as shadows fall,
Still does the supreme privilege of all
Come in that reaching upward of the soul
To find the welcoming Presence at the goal,
And in the Knowledge that our feet have trod
Paths that led from, and must wind back, to God.

INSIGHT

SIRS, when you pity us, I say
You waste your pity. Let it stay,
Well corked and stored upon your shelves,
Until you need it for yourselves.

We do appreciate God's thought
In forming you, before He brought
Us into life. His art was crude,
But oh! so virile in its rude,

Large, elemental strength; and then
He learned His trade in making men,
Learned how to mix and mould the clay
And fashion in a finer way.

How fine that skilful way can be
You need but lift your eyes to see;
And we are glad God placed you there
To lift your eyes and find us fair.

Apprentice labour though you were,
He made you great enough to stir
The best and deepest depths of us,
And we are glad He made you thus.

Aye! we are glad of many things;
God strung our hearts with such fine strings
The least breath moves them, and we hear
Music where silence greets your ear.

We suffer so? But women's souls,
Like violet-powder dropped on coals,
Give forth their best in anguish. Oh,
The subtle secrets that we know

Of joy in sorrow, strange delights
Of ecstasy in pain-filled nights,
And mysteries of gain in loss
Known but to Christ upon the cross!

Our tears are pitiful to you?
Look how the heaven-reflecting dew
Dissolves its life in tears. The sand
Meanwhile lies hard upon the strand.

How could your pity find a place
For us, the mothers of the race?
Men may be fathers unaware,
So poor the title is you wear.

But mothers—who that crown adorns
Knows all its mingled blooms and thorns,
And she whose feet that pain hath trod
Hath walked upon the heights with God.

No, offer us not pity's cup.
There is no looking down or up
Between us; eye looks straight in eye:
Born equals, so we live and die.

A WOMAN'S ANSWER

YOU call me an angel of love and of light,
A being of goodness and heavenly fire,
Sent out from God's kingdom to guide you aright,
In paths where your spirit may mount and aspire,

You say that I glow like a star on its course,
Like a ray from the altar, a spark from the source.

Now list to my answer—let all the world hear it,
  I speak unafraid what I know to be true—
A pure, faithful love is the creative spirit
  Which makes women angels! I live but in you.
We are bound soul to soul by life's holiest laws;
If I am an angel—why, you are the cause.

As my ship skims the sea, I look up from the deck.
  Fair, firm at the wheel shines Love's beautiful form.
And shall I curse the bark that last night went to wreck
  By the pilot abandoned to darkness and storm?
My craft is no stauncher, she too had been lost
Had the wheelman deserted, or slept at his post.

I laid down the wealth of my soul at your feet
  (Some woman does this for some man every day).
No desperate creature who walks in the street
  Has a wickeder heart than I might have, I say,
Had you wantonly misused the treasures you won—
As so many men with heart-riches have done.

This fire from God's altar, this holy love-flame,
  That burns like sweet incense forever for you,
Might now be a wild conflagration of shame,
  Had you tortured my heart, or been base or untrue.
For angels and devils are cast in one mould,
Till love guides them upward or downward, I hold.

I tell you the women who make fervent wives
And sweet tender mothers, had Fate been less fair,
Are the women who might have abandoned their lives
To the madness that springs from and ends in despair,
As the fire on the hearth which sheds brightness around,
Neglected, may level the walls to the ground.

The world makes grave errors in judging these things.
Great good and great evil are born in one breast:
Love horns us and hoofs us, or gives us our wings,
And the best could be worst, as the worst could be best.
You must thank your own worth for what I grew to be,
For the demon lurked under the angel in me.

THE WORLD'S NEED

SO many gods, so many creeds,
So many paths that wind and wind
While just the art of being kind,
Is all the sad world needs.

POEMS OF PROGRESS

THE LAND BETWEEN

BETWEEN the little Here and larger Yonder,
There is a realm (or so one day I read)
Where faithful spirits love-enchained may wander,
Till some remembering soul from earth has fled.
Then, reunited, they go forth afar,
From sphere to sphere, where wondrous angels are.

Not many spirits in that realm are waiting;
Not many pause upon its shores to rest;
For only love, intense and unabating,
Can hold them from the longer, higher quest.
And after grief has wept itself to sleep,
Few hearts on earth their vital memories keep.

Should I pass on, across the mystic border,
Let thy love link me to that pallid land;
I would not seek the heavens of finer order
Until thy barque had left this coarser strand.
How desolate such journeyings would be,
Though straight to Him, were they not shared by thee

Wert thou first called (dear God, how could I bear it?)
I should enchain thee with my love, I know.
Not great enough am I to free thy spirit
From all these tender ties, and bid thee go.

Nor would a soul, unselfish as thine own
Forget so soon, and speed to heaven alone.

On earth we find no joy in ways diverging;
How could we find it in the worlds unseen?
I know old memories from my bosom surging,
Would keep thee waiting in that Land Between,
Until together, side by side, we trod
A path of stars, in our great search for God.

LOVE'S MIRAGE

MIDWAY upon the route, he paused athirst;
And suddenly across the wastes of heat,
He saw cool waters gleaming, and a sweet
Green oasis upon his vision burst.
A tender dream, long in his bosom nursed,
Spread love's illusive verdure for his feet;
The barren sands changed into golden wheat;
The way grew glad that late had seemed accursed.

She shone, the woman wonder, on his soul;
The garden spot, for which men toil and wait;
The house of rest, that is each heart's demand;
But when, at last, he reached the gleaming goal,
He found, oh, cruel irony of fate,
But desert sun upon the desert sand.

THE NEED OF THE WORLD

I KNOW the need of the world,
  Though it would not have me know.
It would hide its sorrow deep
  Where only God may go.
Yet its secret it cannot keep:
It tells it awake, or asleep,
It tells it to all who will heed,
And he who runs may read.
  The need of the world I know.

I know the need of the world,
  When it boasts of its wealth the loudest,
When it flaunts it in all men's eyes,
  When its mien is the gayest and proudest.
Oh! ever it lies—it lies,
For the sound of its laughter dies
In a sob and a smothered moan,
And it weeps when it sits alone.
  The need of the world I know.

I know the need of the world.
  When the earth shakes under the tread
Of men who march to the fight,
  When rivers with blood are red
And there is no law but might,
And the wrong way seems the right;

When he who slaughters the most
Is all men's pride and boast,
The need of the world I know.

I know the need of the world.
When it babbles of gold and fame,
It is only to lead us astray
From the thing that it dare not name,
For this is the sad world's way.
Oh! poor blind world grown grey
With the need of a thing so near,
With the want of a thing so dear.
The need of the world I know.

The need of the world is love.
Deep under the pride of power,
Down under its lust of greed,
For the joys that last but an hour,
There lies forever its need.
For love is the law and the creed
And love is the unnamed goal
Of life, from man to the mole.
Love is the need of the world.

THE GULF STREAM

SKILLED mariner, and counted sane and wise,
That was a curious thing which chanced to me,
So good a sailor on so fair a sea.
With favouring winds and blue unshadowed skies,

Led by the faithful beacon of Love's eyes,
Past reef and shoal, my life-boat bounded free
And fearless of all changes that might be
Under calm waves, where many a sunk rock lies.

A golden dawn ; yet suddenly my barque
Strained at the sails, as in a cyclone's blast ;
And battled with an unseen current's force,
For we had entered when the night was dark
That old tempestuous Gulf Stream of the Past.
But for love's eyes, I had not kept the course.

REMEMBERED

HIS art was loving ; Eros set his sign
Upon that youthful forehead, and he drew
The hearts of women, as the sun draws dew.
Love feeds love's thirst as wine feeds love of wine ;
Nor is there any potion from the vine
Which makes men drunken like the subtle brew
Of kisses crushed by kisses ; and he grew
Inebriated with that draught divine.

Yet in his sober moments, when the sun
Of radiant summer paled to lonely fall,
And passion's sea had grown an ebbing tide,
From out the many, Memory singled one
Full cup that seemed the sweetest of them all—
The warm red mouth that mocked him and denied.

HELEN OF TROY

ON THE ISLE OF CRANAE

THE world an abject vassal to her charms,
  And kings competing for a single smile,
Yet love she knew not, till upon this isle
She gave surrender to abducting arms.
Not Theseus, who plucked her lips' first kiss,
  Not Menelaus, lawful mate and spouse,
  Such answering passion in her heart could rouse,
Or wake such tumult in her soul as this.
Let come what will, let Greece and Asia meet,
  Let heroes die and kingdoms run with gore;
  Let devastation spread from shore to shore—
Resplendent Helen finds her bondage sweet.
The whole world fights her battles, while she lies
Sunned in the fervour of young Paris' eyes.

ON THE ISLE OF RHODES

The battles ended, ardent Paris dead,
  Of faithful Menelaus long bereft,
  Time is the only suitor who is left:
Helen survives, with youth and beauty fled.
By hate remembered, but by love forgot,
  Dethroned and driven from her high estate,
  Unhappy Helen feels the lash of Fate
And knows at last an unloved woman's lot.

The Grecian marvel, and the Trojan joy,
  The world's fair wonder, from her palace flies
  The furies follow, and great Helen dies,
A death of horror, for the pride of Troy.

Yet Time, like Menelaus, all forgives.
Helen, immortal in her beauty, lives.

LAIS WHEN YOUNG

LAIS when young, and all her charms in flower,
  Lais, whose beauty was the fateful light
That led great ships to anchor in the night
And bring their priceless cargoes to her bower,
Lais yet found her cup of sweet turned sour.
  Great Plato's pupil, from his lofty height,
  Zenocrates, unmoved, had seen the white
Sweet wonder of her, and defied her power.

She snared the world in nets of subtle wiles:
  The proud, the famed, all clamoured at her gate;
    Dictators plead, inside her portico;
Wisdom sought madness, in her favouring smiles;
  Now was she made the laughing-stock of fate:
    One loosed her clinging arms, and bade her go.

LAIS WHEN OLD

LAIS, when old and all her beauty gone,
Lais, the erstwhile courted pleasure queen,
Walked homeless through Corinth.
One mocked her mien—
One tossed her coins; she took them and passed on.
Down by the harbour sloped a terraced lawn,
Where fountains played; she paused to view the scene,
A marble palace stood in bowers of green.
'Twas here of old she revelled till the dawn.

Through yonder portico her lovers came—
Hero and statesman, athlete, merchant, sage;
They flung the whole world's treasures at her feet
To buy her favour and exalt her shame

* * * * *

She spat upon her dole of coins in rage
And faded like a phantom down the street.

EXISTENCE

YOU are here, and you are wanted,
Though a waif upon life's stair;
Though the sunlit hours are haunted
With the shadowy shapes of care.
Still the Great One, the All-Seeing
Called your spirit into being—

Gave you strength for any fate.
Since your life by Him was needed,
All your ways by Him are heeded—
  You can trust and you can wait.

You can wait to know the meaning
  Of the troubles sent your soul;
Of the chasms intervening
  'Twixt your purpose and your goal;
Of the sorrows and the trials,
Of the silence and denials,
  Ofttimes answering to your pleas;
Of the stinted sweets of pleasure,
And of pain's too generous measure—
  You can wait the *why* of these.

Forth from planet unto planet,
  You have gone, and you will go.
Space is vast, but we must span it;
  For life's purpose is *to know*.
Earth retains you but a minute,
Make the best of what lies in it;
  Light the pathway where you are.
There is nothing worth the doing
That will leave regret or rueing,
  As you speed from star to star.

You are part of the Beginning,
  You are parcel of To-day.
When He set His world to spinning
  You were flung upon your way.

When the system falls to pieces,
When this pulsing epoch ceases,
When the *is* becomes the *was*,
You will live, for you will enter
In the great Creative Centre,
In the All-Enduring Cause.

HOLIDAY SONGS

SAILING away on a summer sea,
Out of the bleak March weather;
Drifting away for a loaf and play,
Just you and I together;
And it's good-bye worry and good-bye hurry
And never a care have we;
With the sea below and the sun above
And nothing to do but dream and love,
Sailing away together.

Sailing away from the grim old town
And tasks the town calls duty;
Sailing away from walls of grey
To a land of bloom and beauty,
And it's good-bye to letters from our lessers and our betters,
To the cold world's smile or its frown.
We sail away on a sunny track
To find the summer and bring it back
And love is our only duty.

II

Afloat on a sea of passion
  Without a compass or chart,
But the glow of your eye shows the sun is high,
  By the sextant of my heart.
I know we are nearing the tropics
  By the languor that round us lies,
And the smile on your mouth says the course is
    south
  And the port is Paradise.

We have left grey skies behind us,
  We sail under skies of blue;
You are off with me on lovers' sea,
  And I am away with you.
We have not a single sorrow,
  And I have but one fear—
That my lips may miss one offered kiss
  From the mouth that is smiling near.

There is no land of winter;
  There is no world of care;
There is bloom and mirth all over the earth,
  And love, love everywhere.
Our boat is the barque of Pleasure,
  And whatever port we sight
The touch of your hand will make the land
  The Harbour of Pure Delight.

ASTROLABIUS

(THE CHILD OF ABELARD AND HELOISE)

I

WRENCHED from a passing comet in its flight,
By that great force of two mad hearts aflame,
A soul incarnate, back to earth you came,
To glow like star-dust for a little night.
Deep shadows hide you wholly from our sight;
The centuries leave nothing but your name,
Tinged with the lustre of a splendid shame,
That blazed oblivion with rebellious light.

The mighty passion that became your cause,
Still burns its lengthening path across the years;
We feel its raptures, and we see its tears
And ponder on its retributive laws.
Time keeps that deathless story ever new;
Yet finds no answer, when we ask of you.

II

At Argenteuil, I saw the lonely cell
Where Héloïse dreamed through her broken rest,
That baby lips pulled at her undried breast.
It needed but my woman's heart to tell
Of those long vigils and the tears that fell
When aching arms reached out in fruitless quest,
As after flight, wings brood an empty nest.
So well I know that sorrow, ah so well!)

Across the centuries there comes no sound
Of that vast anguish; not one sigh or word
Or echo of the mother loss has stirred,
The sea of silence, lasting and profound.
Yet to each heart, that once has felt this grief,
Sad Memory restores Time's missing leaf.

III

But what of you? Who took the mother's place
When sweet expanding love its object sought?
Was there a voice to tell her tragic lot,
And did you ever look upon her face?
Was yours a cloistered seeking after grace?
Or in the flame of adolescent thought
When Abelard's departed passions caught
To burn again in you and leave their trace?

Conceived in nature's bold primordial way
(As in their revolutions, suns create),
You came to earth, a soul immaculate,
Baptized in fire, with some great part to play.
What was that part, and wherefore hid from us,
Immortal mystery, Astrolabius!

COMPLETION

WHEN I shall meet God's generous dispensers
Of all the riches in the heavenly store,
Those lesser gods, who act as Recompensers
For loneliness and loss upon this shore,

Methinks abashed, and somewhat hesitating,
  My soul its wish and longing will declare.
Lest they reply: "Here are no bounties waiting:
  We gave on earth, your portion and your share."

Then shall I answer: "Yea, I do remember
  The many blessings to my life allowed;
My June was always longer than December,
  My sun was always stronger than my cloud,
My joy was ever deeper than my sorrow,
  My gain was ever greater than my loss,
My yesterday seemed less than my to-morrow,
  The crown looked always larger than the cross.

"I have known love, in all its radiant splendour,
  It shone upon my pathway to the end.
I trod no road that did not bloom with tender
  And fragrant blossoms, planted by some friend.
And those material things we call successes,
  In modest measure, crowned my earthly lot.
Yet was there one sweet happiness that blesses
  The life of woman, which to me came not.

"I knew the hope of motherhood; a season
  I felt a fluttering heart beat 'neath my own;
A little cry—then silence. For that reason
  I dare, to you, my only wish make known.
The babe who grew to angelhood in heaven,
  I never watched unfold from child to man.
And so I ask, that unto me be given
  That motherhood, which was God's primal plan.

"All womankind He meant to share his glories;
He meant us all to nurse our babes to rest.
To croon them songs, to tell them sleepy stories,
Else why the wonder of a woman's breast?
He must provide for all earth's cheated mothers
In His vast heavens of shining sphere on sphere,
And with my son, there must be many others—
My spirit children who will claim me here.

"Fair creatures by my loving thoughts created—
Too finely fashioned for a mortal birth—
Between the borders of two worlds they waited
Until they saw my spirit leave the earth.
In God's great nursery they must be waiting
To welcome me with many an infant wile.
Now let me go and satisfy this longing
To mother children for a little while."

SLEEP'S TREACHERY

AS the grey twilight, tiptoed down the deep
And shadowy valley, to the day's dark end,
She whom I thought my ever-faithful friend,
Fair-browed, calm-eyed and mother-bosomed Sleep,
Met me with smiles. "Poor longing heart, I keep
Sweet joy for you," she murmured. "I will send
One whom you love, with your own soul to blend
In visions, as the night hours onward creep."

I trusted her; and watched by starry beams,
   I slumbered soundly, free from all alarms.
      Then not my love, but one long banished came,
Led by false Sleep, down secret stairs of dreams
   And clasped me, unresisting in fond arms.
      Oh, treacherous sleep—to sell me to such shame!

ART *VERSUS* CUPID

[*A room in a private house. A maiden sitting before a fire meditating.*]

MAIDEN

NOW have I fully fixed upon my part,
   Good-bye to dreams; for me a life of art
Beloved art! Oh, realm serene and fair,
Above the mean and sordid world of care,
Above earth's small ambitions and desires!
Art! art! the very word my soul inspires!
From foolish memories it sets me free.
Not what has been, but that which is to be
Absorbs me now. Adieu to vain regret!
The bow is tensely drawn—the target set.

[*A knock at the door.*

MAID (*aside*)

The night is dark and chill; the hour is late.

(*Aloud*)

Who knocks upon my door?

A Voice Outside

'Tis I, your fate!

MAID

Thou dost deceive, not me, but thine own self
My fate is not a wandering, vagrant elf.
My fate is here, within this throbbing heart
That beats alone for glory, and for art.

Voice

[*Another knock at door.*]

Pray, let me in; I am so faint and cold.
[*Door is pushed ajar. Enter* CUPID, *who approaches fire with outstretched hands.*]

MAID (*indignantly*)

Methinks thou art not faint, however cold,
But rather too courageous, and most bold;
Surprisingly ill-mannered, sir, and rude,
Without an invitation to intrude
Into my very presence.

CUPID (*warming his hands*)

But, you see,
Girls never mind a little chap like me.
They're always watching for me on the sly,
And hoping I will call.

MAID (*haughtily*)

Indeed, not I!
My heart has listened to a sweeter voice,
A clarion call that gives command—not choice
And I have answered to that call, "I come";
To other voices shall my ears be dumb.
To art alone I consecrate my life—
Art is my spouse, and I his willing wife

CUPID (*slowly, gazing in the grate*)

Art is a sultan, and you must divide
His love with many another ill-fed bride.
Now I know one who worships you alone.

MAID (*impatiently*)

I will not listen! for the dice is thrown
And art has won me. On my brow some day
Shall rest the laurel wreath—

CUPID (*sitting down and looking at* MAID *critically*)

Just let me say
I think sweet orange blossoms under lace
Are better suited to your type of face.

MAID (*ignoring interruption*)

I yet shall stand before an audience
That listens as one mind, absorbed, intense;

And with my genius I shall rouse its cheers,
Still it to silence, soften it to tears,
Or wake its laughter. Oh, the play! the play!
The play's the thing! My boy, *the play!!*

CUPID (*suddenly clapping his hands*)

Oh, say!
I know a splendid rôle for you to take,
And one that always keeps the house awake—
And calls for pretty dressing. Oh, it's great!

MAID (*excitedly*)

Well, well, what is it? Wherefore make me wait?

CUPID (*tapping his brow, thoughtfully*)

How is it those lines run—oh, now I know;
You make a stately entrance—measured—slow—
To stirring music; then you kneel and say
Something about—to honour and obey—
For better and for worse—till death do part.

MAID (*angrily*)

Be still, you foolish boy; that is not *art*.

CUPID (*seriously*)

She needs great skill who takes the rôle of wife
In God's stupendous drama human life.

MAID (*suddenly becoming serious*)

So I once thought! Oh, once my very soul
Was filled and thrilled with dreaming of that rôle.
Life seemed so wonderful; it held for me
No purpose, no ambition, but to be
Loving and loved. My highest thought of fame
Was some day bearing my dear lover's name.
Alone, I ofttimes uttered it aloud,
Or wrote it down, half timid, and all proud
To see myself lost utterly in him:
As some small star might joy in growing dim
When sinking in the sun; or as the dew,
Forgetting the brief little life it knew
In space, might on the ocean's bosom fall
And ask for nothing—only to give all.

CUPID (*aside*)

Now, *that's* the talk—it's music to my ear
After that stuff on "art" and a "career."
I hope she'll keep it up.

MAIDEN (*continuing her reverie*)

Again my dream
Shaped into changing pictures. I would seem
To see myself in beautiful array
Move down the aisle upon my wedding day;

And then I saw the modest living-room
With lighted lamp, and fragrant plants in bloom,
And books and sewing scattered all about,
And just we two alone.

CUPID (*in glee aside*)

There's not a doubt
I'll land her yet!

MAIDEN

My dream kaleidoscope
Changed still again, and framed love's dearest hope—
The trinity of home; and life was good
And all its deepest meaning understood.

[*Sits lost in a dream. Behind scenes a voice sings a lullaby,* "Beautiful Land of Nod." CUPID *in ecstasy tiptoes about and clasps his hands in delight.*]

Another scene! a matron in her prime,
I saw myself glide peacefully with time
Into the quiet middle years, content
With simple joys the dear home circle lent.
My sons and daughters made my diadem;
I saw my happy youth renewed in them.
The pain of growing old lost all its sting,
For Love stood near—in Winter, as in Spring.

[CUPID *tiptoes to door and makes a signal.* MAIDEN *starts up dramatically.*]

'Twas but a dream! I woke all suddenly.
The world had changed! And now life means to me

My art—the stage—excitement and the crowd—
The glare of many foot-lights—and the loud
Applause of men, as I cry in rage,
"Give me the dagger!" or creep down the stage
In that sleep-walking scene. Oh, art like mine
Will send the chills down every listener's spine!
And when I choose, salt tears shall freely flow
As in the moonlight I cry, "Romeo! Romeo!
Oh, wherefore art thou, Romeo?"

Ay, 'tis done

My dream of home life.

CUPID

It is but begun.

MAIDEN

The heart but once can dream a dream so fair.
And so henceforth love thoughts I do forswear;
Since faith in love has crumbled to the dust,
In fame alone, I put my hope and trust.

[CUPID *at the door beckons excitedly. Enter lover with outstretched arms.*]

CUPID

Here's one who will explain yourself to you
And make that old sweet dream of love come true.
Fix up your foolish quarrel; time is brief—
So waste no more of it in doubt or grief.

[*The lovers meet and embrace.*]

CUPID (*in doorway*)

Warm lip to lip, and heart to beating heart,
The cast is made—My Lady has her part.

CURTAIN

THE REVOLT OF VASHTI

(FROM THE DRAMA OF MIZPAH)

AHASUERAS

IS this the way to greet thy loving spouse,
But now returned from scenes of blood and strife?
I pray thee raise thy veil and let me gaze
Upon that beauty which hath greater power
To conquer me than all the arts of war!

VASHTI

My beauty! Ay, my *beauty!* I do hold,
In thy regard, no more an honoured place
Than yonder marble pillar, or the gold
And jewelled wine-cup which thy lips caress.
Thou wouldst degrade me in the people's sight!

AHASUERAS

Degrade thee, Vashti? Rather do I seek
To show my people who are gathered here
How, as the consort of so fair a queen,

I feel more pride than as the mighty king :
For there be many rulers on the earth,
But only *one* such queen. Come, raise thy veil!

VASHTI

Ay! only *one* such queen! A queen is one
Who shares her husband's greatness and his throne.
I am no more than yonder dancing girl
Who struts and smirks before a royal court!
But I will loose my veil and loose my tongue!
Now listen, sire—my master and my king;
And let thy princes and the court give ear!
'Tis time all heard how Vashti feels her shame.

AHASUERAS

Shame is no word to couple with thy name!
Shame and a spotless woman may not meet,
Even in a sentence. Choose another word.

VASHTI

Ay, *shame*, my lord—there is no synonym
That can give voice to my ignoble state.
To be a thing for eyes to gaze upon,
Yet held an outcast from thy heart and mind;
To hear my beauty praised but not my worth;
To come and go at Pleasure's beck and call,
While barred from Wisdom's conclaves! Think ye

that

A noble calling for a noble dame?
Why, any concubine amongst thy train
Could play my royal part as well as I—
Were she as fair!

AHASUERUS

Queen Vashti, art thou *mad?*
I would behead another did he dare
To so besmirch thee with comparison.

VASHTI (*to the court*)

Gaze now your fill! Behold Queen Vashti's eyes!
How large they gleam beneath her inch of brow!
How like a great white star, her splendid face
Shines through the midnight forest of her hair
And see the crushed pomegranate of her mouth!
Observe her arms, her throat, her gleaming breasts,
Whereon the royal jewels rise and fall!—
And note the crescent curving of her hips,
And lovely limbs suggested 'neath her robes!
Gaze, gaze, I say, for these have made her queen!
She hath no mind, no heart, no dignity,
Worth royal recognition and regard;
But her fair body approbation meets
And whets the sated appetite of kings!
Now ye have seen what she was bid to show:
The queen hath played her part and begs to go!

AHASUERAS

Ay, Vashti, go and never more return!
Not only hast thou wronged thine own true lord,
And mocked and shamed me in the people's eyes,
But thou hast wronged all princes and all men
By thy pernicious and rebellious ways.
Queens act and subjects imitate. So let
Queen Vashti weigh her conduct and her words,
Or be no more called "queen!"

VASHTI

I was a princess ere I was a queen,
And worthy of a better fate than this!
There lies the crown that made me queen in name!
Here stands the woman—wife in name alone!
Now, no more queen—nor wife—but woman still—
Ay, and a woman strong enough to be
Her own avenger.

THE CHOOSING OF ESTHER

(FROM THE DRAMA OF MIZPAH)

AHASUERAS

TELL me thy name!

ESTHER

My name, great sire, is Esther.

AHASUERAS

So thou art Esther? Esther! 'tis a name
Breathed into sound as softly as a sigh.
A woman's name should melt upon the lips
Like Love's first kisses, and thy countenance
Is fit companion for so sweet a name!

ESTHER

Thou art most kind. I would my name and face
Were mine own making and not accident.
Then I might feel elated at thy praise,
Where now I feel confusion.

AHASUERAS

Thou hast wit
As well as beauty, Esther. Both are gems
That do embellish woman in man's sight.
Yet they are gems of second magnitude!
Dost *thou* possess the one great perfect gem—
The matchless jewel of the world called *love*?

ESTHER

Sire, in the heart of every woman dwells
That wondrous perfect gem!

AHASUERAS

Then, Esther, speak!
And tell me what is *love!* I fain would know
Thy definition of that much-mouthed word,
By woman most employed—least understood.

ESTHER

What can a humble Jewish maiden know
That would instruct a warrior and a king?
I have but dreamed of love as maidens will
While thou hast known its fulness. All the world
Loves Great Ahasueras!

AHASUERAS

All the world
Fears great Ahasueras! Kings, my child,
Are rarely loved as anything but kings.
Love, as I see it in the court and camp,
Means seeking royal favour. I would know
How love is fashioned in a maiden's dreams.

ESTHER

Sire, love seeks nothing that kings can bestow.
Love is the king of all kings here below;
Love makes the monarch but a bashful boy,
Love makes the peasant monarch in his joy;
Love seeks no place, all places are the same,
When lighted by the radiance of love's flame.
Who deems proud love could fawn to power and
splendour
Hath known not love, but some base-born pretender.

AHASUERAS

If this be love, I would know more of it.
Speak on, fair Esther! What is love beside?

ESTHER

Love is in all things, all things are in love.
Love is the earth, the sea, the skies above;
Love is the bird, the blossom, and the wind;
Love hath a million eyes, yet love is blind;
Love is a tempest, awful in its might;
Love is the silence of a moon-lit night;
Love is the aim of every human soul;
And he who hath not loved hath missed life's goal!

AHASUERAS

But tell me of thyself, of thine own dreams!
How wouldst thou love, and how be loved again?

ESTHER

Who most doth love thinks least of love's return;
She is content to feel the passion burn
In her own bosom, and its sacred fire
Consumes each selfish purpose and desire.
'Tis in the giving, love's best rapture lies,
Not in the counting of the things it buys.

AHASUERAS

Yet, is there not vast anguish and despair
In love that finds no answering word or smile?

ESTHER

So radiant is love, it lends a glow
To each dark sorrow and to every woe.

To love completely is to part with pain,
Nor is there mortal who can love in vain.
Love is its own reward, it pays full measure,
And in love's sharpest grief lies subtlest pleasure.

AHASUERAS

Methinks, a mighty warrior, lord or king
Must in thy fancy play the lover's part;
None else could wake such reverential thought.

ESTHER

When woman loves one born of lowly state,
Her thought gives crown and sceptre to her mate;
Yet be he king, or chief of some great clan,
She loves him but as woman loves a man.
Monarch or peasant, 'tis the same, I wis
When once she gives him love's surrendering kiss.

HONEYMOON SCENE

(FROM THE DRAMA OF MIZPAH)

AHASUERAS

WHAT were thy thoughts, sweet Esther? Something passed
Across thy face, that for a moment veiled
Thy soul from mine, and left me desolate.
Thy thoughts were not of me?

ESTHER

Ay, *all* of thee!
I wondered, if in truth, though wert content
With me—thy choice. Was there no other one
Of all who passed before thee at thy court
Whose memory pursues thee with regret?

AHASUERAS

I do confess I much regret that day
And wish I could relive it.

ESTHER

Oh! My lord!

AHASUERAS

Yea! I regret those hours I wasted on
The poor procession that preceded thee.
Hadst thou come first, then all the added wealth
Of one long day of loving thee were mine—
A boundless fortune squandered. Though I live
To three score years and ten, as I do hope,
In wedded love beside thee, that one day
Was filched from me and cannot be restored.

ESTHER

And then to think how frightened and abashed
I hung outside thy gates from early morn,
Not daring to go in and meet thine eyes,
Till pitying twilight clothed me in her veil.
And evening walked beside me to thy door.

AHASUERAS

So it was thou, fair thief, who stole that day,
And made me poorer, by—how many hours?

ESTHER

Full eight, I think. They seemed a hundred then,
And now time flies a hundred times too fast.

AHASUERAS

Then eight more kisses do I claim from thee
This very hour—first tithes of many due.
I shall exact these payments as I will,
And if they be not ready on demand,
I'll lock thee in the prison of my arms,
Like this—and take them so—and so—and so!

ESTHER

But kings must think of other things than love
And live for other aims than happiness.
I would not drag thee from thy altitude
Of mighty ruler and great conqueror
To chain thee by my side.

AHASUERAS

Such slavery
Would please me better than to conquer earth
Without thee, Esther. I have stood on heights
And heard the cheers of multitudes below;

Have known the loneliness of being great.
Now, let me live and love thee, like a man,
Forgetting I am king—
I am content.

ESTHER

Content is not the pathway to great deeds.
As man, I hold thee higher than all kings;
As king, thou must stand higher than all men
In other eyes. Let no one say of me:
"She spoiled his greatness by her littleness;
She made a languorous lover of a king,
And silenced war-cries on commanding lips—
With honeyed kisses; made her woman's arms
Preferred to armour, and her couch to tents,
Until the kingdom, with no guiding hand,
Plunged down to ruin."

AHASUERAS

Thou wouldst have me go—
So soon thy heart hath wearied?

ESTHER

My heart is bursting with its love for thee!
Canst thou not feel its fervour? But great men
Need wiser guidance than a woman's heart.
My pride in thee is equal to my love,
And I would have thee greater than thou art—
Ay, greater than all other men on earth—

Though forced long years to feed my hungry heart
On food of memories and wine of tears,
Wert thou but winning glory and renown.

AHASUERAS

Thou art most noble, Esther; thou art fit
To be the consort of a king of kings.
But I have chewed upon ambition's husks
And starved for love through all my manhood's years;
And now the mighty gods have seen it fit
To spread love's banquet and to name thee host,
May I not feast my fill? O Esther, take
The tempting nectar of those lips away
And give me wine to rouse the brute in me,
To make me thirst for blood instead of love!
Wine! Wine! I say!

ESTHER

Ahasueras, wait!
Methinks good music is wine turned to sound.
Here comes thy minstrel with an offering
Pressed from the ripened fruit of my fond heart.
Mine own the words and mine the melody
And may it linger longer in thine ear
Than on thy lip would stay the taste of wine.
Sing on!

MINSTREL

When from the field returning,
Love is a warrior's yearning,
Love in his heart is burning,
Love is his dream.

Talk not to him of glory,
Speak not of faces gory,
Sing of love's tender story,
Make it thy theme.
Sing of his lady's tresses,
Sing of the smile that blesses,
Sing of the sweet caresses,
And yet again
Sing of fair children's faces,
Sing of the dear home graces,
Sing till the vacant places,
Ring with thy strain.
Yet as the days go speeding,
Shall he arise unheeding
Love songs or words of pleading,
Strong in his might!
Helmet and armour wearing,
Hies he to deeds of daring,
Forth to the battle faring,
Back to the fight.
Sing now of ranks contending,
Sing of loud voices blending,
Sing of great warriors sending
Death to their foes!
Sing of war missiles humming,
Strike into martial drumming,
Sing of great victory coming,
As forth he goes.

Back to the battle faring,
Back into deeds of daring,
Back to the fight.

AHASUERAS

No less a lover but a greater man
A better warrior and a nobler king,
I will be from this hour for thy dear sake.

THE COST

GOD finished woman in the twilight hour
And said, "To-morrow thou shalt find thy place:
Man's complement, the mother of the race—
With love the motive power—
The one compelling power."

All night she dreamed and wondered. With the light
Her lover came—and then she understood
The purpose of her being. Life was good
And all the world seemed right—
And nothing was, but right.

She had no wish for any wider sway:
By all the questions of the world unvexed,
Supremely loving and superbly sexed,
She passed upon her way—
Her feminine fair way.

But God neglected, when He fashioned man
To fuse the molten splendour of his mind
With that sixth sense He gave to womankind.
    And so He marred His plan—
    Ay, marred His own great plan.

She asked so little, and so much she gave,
That man grew selfish : and she soon became,
To God's great sorrow and the whole world's shame,
    Man's sweet and patient slave—
    His uncomplaining slave.

Yet in the nights (oh! nights so dark and long)
She clasped her little children to her breast
And wept. And in her anguish of unrest
    She thought upon her wrong ;
    She knew how great her wrong.

And one sad hour, she said unto her heart,
"Since thou art cause of all my bitter pain,
I bid thee abdicate the throne : let brain
    Rule now, and do his part—
    His masterful, strong part."

She wept no more. By new ambition stirred
Her ways led out, to regions strange and vast.
Men stood aside and watched, dismayed, aghast,
    And all the world demurred—
    Misjudged her, and demurred.

Still on and up, from sphere to widening sphere,
Till thorny paths bloomed with the rose of fame.
Who once demurred, now followed with acclaim:
The hiss died in the cheer—
The loud applauding cheer.

She stood triumphant in that radiant hour,
Man's mental equal, and competitor.
But ah! the cost! from out the heart of her
Had gone love's motive power—
Love's all-compelling power.

THE VOICE

I DREAMED a Voice, of one God-authorised,
Cried loudly thro' the world, "Disarm! Disarm.
And there was consternation in the camps;
And men who strutted under braid and lace
Beat on their medalled breasts, and wailed, "Undone!"
The word was echoed from a thousand hills,
And shop and mill, and factory and forge,
Where throve the awful industries of death,
Hushed into silence. Scrawled upon the doors,
The passer read, "Peace bids her children starve."
But foolish women clasped their little sons
And wept for joy, not reasoning like men.

Again the Voice commanded: "Now go forth
And build a world for Progress and for Peace.

This work has waited since the earth was shaped;
But men were fighting, and they could not toil.
The needs of life outnumber needs of death.
Leave death with God. Go forth, I say, and build.'

And then a sudden, comprehensive joy
Shone in the eyes of men; and one who thought
Only of conquests and of victories
Woke from his gloomy reverie and cried,
"Ay, come and build! I challenge all to try.
And I will make a world more beautiful
Than Eden was before the serpent came."
And like a running flame on western wilds,
Ambition spread from mind to listening mind,
And lo! the looms were busy once again,
And all the earth resounded with men's toil.

Vast palaces of Science graced the world;
Their banquet tables spread with feasts of truth
For all who hungered. Music kissed the air,
Once rent with boom of cannons. Statues gleamed
From wooded ways, where ambushed armies hid
In times of old. The sea and air were gay
With shining sails that soared from land to land.
A universal language of the world
Made nations kin, and poverty was known
But as a word marked "obsolete," like war.
The arts were kindled with celestial fire;
New poets sang so Homer's fame grew dim;

And brush and chisel gave the wondering race
Sublimer treasures than old Greece displayed.
Men differed still; fierce argument arose,
For men are human in this human sphere;
But unarmed Arbitration stood between
And Reason settled in a hundred hours
What War disputed for a hundred years.

Oh, that a Voice, of one God-authorised
Might cry to all mankind, Disarm! Disarm!

GOD'S ANSWER

ONCE in a time of trouble and of care
I dreamed I talked with God about my pain
With sleepland courage, daring to complain
Of what I deemed ungracious and unfair.
"Lord, I have grovelled on my knees in prayer
Hour after hour," I cried; "yet all in vain;
No hand leads up to heights I would attain,
No path is shown me out of my despair."

Then answered God: "Three things I gave to thee—
Clear brain, brave will, and strength of mind and heart,
All implements divine, to shape the way.
Why shift the burden of thy toil on Me?
Till to the utmost he has done his part
With all his might, let no man *dare* to pray."

THE EDICT OF THE SEX

TWO thousand years had passed since Christ
was born,
When suddenly there rose a mighty host
Of women, sweeping to a central goal
As many rivers sweep on to the sea.
They came from mountains, valleys, and from coasts.
And from all lands, all nations, and all ranks,
Speaking all languages, but thinking one.
And that one language—Peace.

'Listen,' they said,
And straightway was there silence on the earth,
For men were dumb with wonder and surprise.
'Listen, O mighty masters of the world,
And hear the edict of all womankind:
Since Christ His new commandment gave to men,
Love one another, full two thousand years
Have passed away, yet earth is red with blood.
The strong male rulers of the world proclaim
Their weakness, when we ask that war shall cease.
Now will the poor weak women of the world
Proclaim their strength, and say that war shall end
Hear, then, our edict: Never from this day
Will any woman on the crust of earth
Mother a warrior. We have sworn the oath
And will go barren to the waiting tomb
Rather than breed strong sons at wars behest,
Or bring fair daughters into life, to bear

The pain of travail, for no end but war.
Ay! let the race die out for lack of babes:
Better a dying race than endless wars!
Better a silent world than noise of guns
And clash of armies.

"Long we asked for peace,
And oft you promised—but to fight again.
At last you told us, war must ever be
While men existed, laughing at our plea
For the disarmament of all mankind.
Then in our hearts flamed such a mad desire
For peace on earth, as lights the world at times
With some great conflagration; and it spread
From distant land to land, from sea to sea,
Until all women thought as with one mind
And spoke as with one voice; and now behold!
The great Crusading Syndicate of Peace,
Filling all space with one supreme resolve.
Give us, O men, your word that war shall end:
Disarm the world, and we will give you sons—
Sons to construct, and daughters to adorn
A beautiful new earth, where there shall be
Fewer and finer people, opulence
And opportunity and peace for all.
Until you promise peace no shrill birth-cry
Shall sound again upon the aging earth.
We wait your answer."

And the world was still
While men considered.

THE WORLD-CHILD

AT times I am the mother of the world;
And mine seem all its sorrows, and its fears.
That rose, which in each mother-heart is curled,
The rose of pity, opens with my tears,
And, waking in the night, I lie and hark
To the lone sobbing, and the wild alarms,
Of my World-child, a wailing in the dark:
The child I fain would shelter in my arms.
I call to it (as from another room
A mother calls, what time she cannot go):
"Sleep well, dear world; Love hides behind this gloom.
There is no need for wakefulness or woe,
The long, long night is almost past and gone,
The day is near." And yet the world weeps on.

Again I follow it, throughout the day.
With anxious eyes I see it trip and fall,
And hurt itself in many a foolish way:
Childlike, unheeding warning word or call.
I see it grasp and grasping, break the toys
It cried to own, then toss them on the floor
And, breathless, hurry after fancied joys
That cease to please, when added to its store.

I see the lacerations on its hands,
Made by forbidden tools; but when it weeps,
I also weep, as one who understands;
And having been a child, the memory keeps.
Ah, my poor world, however wrong thy part,
Still is there pity in my mother heart.

THE HEIGHTS

I CRIED, "Dear Angel, lead me to the heights,
And spur me to the top."
The Angel answered, "Stop
And set thy house in order; make it fair
For absent ones who may be speeding there.
Then will we talk of heights."

I put my house in order. "Now lead on!"
The Angel said, "Not yet;
Thy garden is beset
By thorns and tares; go weed it, so all those
Who come to gaze may find the unvexed rose;
Then will we journey on."

I weeded well my garden. "All is done."
The Angel shook his head.
"A beggar stands," he said,
"Outside thy gates; till thou hast given heed
And soothed his sorrow, and supplied his need,
Say not that all is done."

The beggar left me singing. "Now at last—
At last the path is clear."
"Nay, there is one draws near
Who seeks, like thee, the difficult highway.
He lacks thy courage; cheer him through the day.
Then will we cry 'At last!'"

I helped my weaker brother. "Now the heights;
Oh, guide me, Angel, guide!"
The Presence at my side,
With radiant face, said, "Look, where are we now?"
And lo! we stood upon the mountain's brow—
The heights, the shining heights!

ON SEEING "THE HOUSE OF JULIA" AT HERCULANEUM

NOT great Vesuvius, in all his ire,
Nor all the centuries, could hide your shame.
There is the little window where you came,
With eyes that woke the demon of desire,
And lips like rose leaves, fashioned out of fire:
And from the lava leaps the molten flame
Of your old sins. The walls cry out your name—
Your face seems rising from the funeral pyre.

There must have dwelt, within your fated town,
Full many a virtuous dame, and noble wife
Who made your beauty seem as star to sun;

How strange the centuries have handed down
Your name, fair Julia, of immoral life,
And left the others to oblivion.

A PRAYER

MASTER of sweet and loving lore,
Give us the open mind
To know religion means no more,
No less, than being kind.

Give us the comprehensive sight
That sees another's need;
And let our aim to set things right
Prove God inspired our creed.

Give us the soul to know our kin
That dwell in flock and herd,
The voice to fight man's shameful sin
Against the beast and bird.

Give us a heart with love so fraught
For all created things,
That even our unspoken thought
Bears healing on its wings.

Give us religion that will cope
With life's colossal woes,
And turn a radiant face of hope
On troops of pigmy foes

Give us the mastery of our fate
In thoughts so warm and white,
They stamp upon the brows of hate
Love's glorious seal of light.

Give us the strong, courageous faith
That makes of pain a friend,
And calls the secret word of death
"Beginning," and not "end."

WHAT IS RIGHT LIVING?

WHAT is right living? Just to do your best
When worst seems easier. To bear the ills
Of daily life with patient cheerfulness
Nor waste dear time recounting them.

To talk
Of hopeful things when doubt is in the air.
To count your blessings often, giving thanks,
And to accept your sorrows silently,
Nor question why you suffer. To accept
The whole life as one perfected plan.
And welcome each event as part of it.
To work, and love your work; to trust, to pray
For larger usefulness and clearer sight.
This is right living, pleasing in God's eyes.
Though you be heathen, heretic or Jew.

JUSTICE

HOWEVER inexplicable may seem
  Event and circumstance upon this earth,
Though favours fall on those who none esteem,
  And insult and indifference greet worth;
Though poverty repays the life of toil,
  And riches spring where idle feet have trod,
And storms lay waste the patiently tilled soil—
  Yet Justice sways the universe of God.

As undisturbed the stately stars remain
  Beyond the glare of day's obscuring light,
So Justice dwells, though mortal eyes in vain
  Seek it persistently by reason's sight.
But when, once freed, the illumined soul looks out.
Its cry will be, "O God, how could I doubt!"

TIME'S GAZE

TIME looked me in the eyes while passing by
  The milestone of the year. That piercing gaze
Was both an accusation and reproach.
No speech was needed. In a sorrowing look
More meaning lies than in complaining words,
And silence hurts as keenly as reproof.

Oh, opulent, kind giver of rich hours,
How have I used thy benefits! As babes
Unstring a necklace, laughing at the sound
Of priceless jewels dropping one by one,
So have I laughed while precious moments rolled
Into the hidden corners of the past.
And I have let large opportunities
For high endeavour move unheeded by,
While little joys and cares absorbed my strength.
And yet, dear Time, set to my credit this:
Not one white hour have I made black with hate,
Nor wished one living creature aught but good.

Be patient with me. Though the sun slants west,
The day has not yet finished, and I feel
Necessity for action and resolve
Bear in upon my consciousness. I know
The earth's eternal need of earnest souls,
And the great hunger of the world for Love.
I know the goal to high achievement lies
Through the dull pathway of self-conquest first;
And on the stairs of little duties done
We climb to joys that stand thy test. O Time,
Be patient with me, and another day,
Perchance, in passing by, thine eyes may smile.

THE WORKER AND THE WORK

IN what I do I note the marring flaw,
The imperfections of the work I see;
Nor am I one who rather *do* than *be*,
Since its reversal is Creation's law.

Nay, since there lies a better and a worse,
A lesser and a larger, in men's view,
I would be better than the thing I do,
As God is greater than His universe.

He shaped Himself before He shaped one world
A million eons, toiling day and night,
He built Himself to majesty and might,
Before the planets into space were hurled.

And when Creation's early work was done,
What crude beginnings out of chaos came—
A formless nebula, a wavering flame,
An errant comet, a voracious sun.

And, still unable to perfect His plan,
What awful creatures at His touch found birth—
Those protoplasmic monsters of the earth,
That owned the world before He fashioned Man.

And now, behold the poor unfinished state
Of this, His latest masterpiece! Then why,
Seeing the flaws in my own work, should I
Be troubled that no voice proclaims it great?

Before me lie the cycling rounds of years ;
With this small earth will die the thing I do :
The thing I am, goes journeying onward through
A million lives, upon a million spheres.

My work I build, as best I can and may,
Knowing all mortal effort ends in dust.
I build myself, not as I may, but must,
Knowing, or good, or ill, that self must stay.

Along the ages, out, and on, afar,
Its journey leads, and must perforce be made.
Likewise its choice, with things of shame and shade,
Or up the path of light, from star to star.

When all these solar systems shall disperse,
Perchance this labour, and this self-control,
May find reward ; and my completed soul
Will fling in space, a little universe.

ART THOU ALIVE ?

ART thou alive ? Nay, not too soon reply,
Tho' hand, and foot, and lip, and ear, and eye,
Respond, and do thy bidding yet may be
Grim death has done his direst work with thee.
Life, as God gives it is a thing apart
From active body and from beating heart.

It is the vital spark, the unseen fire,
That moves the mind to reason and aspire;
It is the force that bids emotion roll,
In mighty billows from the surging soul.

It is the light that grows from hour to hour,
And floods the brain with consciousness of power;
It is the spirit dominating all,
And reaching God with its imperious call,
Until the shining glory of His face,
Illuminates each sorrowful, dark place;
It is the truth that sets the bondsman free,
Knowing he will be what he wills to be.
With its unburied dead the earth is sad.
Art thou alive? proclaim it and be glad.
Perchance the dead may hear thee and arise,
Knowing they live, and *here* is Paradise.

TO-DAY

I LOVE this age of energy and force,
  Expectantly I greet each pregnant hour;
Emerging from the all-creative source,
  Supreme with promise, imminent with power.
The strident whistle and the clanging bell,
  The noise of gongs, the rush of motored things
Are but the prophet voices which foretell
  A time when thought may use unfettered wings.

Too long the drudgery of earth has been
A barrier 'twixt man and his own mind.
Remove the stone, and lo! the Christ within;
For He is there, and who so seeks shall find.
The Great Inventor is the Modern Priest.
He paves the pathway to a higher goal.
Once from the grind of endless toil released
Man will explore the kingdom of his soul.

And all this restless rush, this strain and strife,
This noise and glare is but the fanfarade
That ushers in the more majestic life
Where faith shall walk with science, unafraid.
I feel the strong vibrations of the earth,
I sense the coming of an hour sublime,
And bless the star that watched above my birth
And let me live in this important time.

THE LADDER

UNTO each mortal who comes to earth
A ladder is given by God, at birth,
And up this ladder the soul must go,
Step by step, from the valley below;
Step by step, to the centre of space,
On this ladder of lives, to the Starting Place.

In time departed (which yet endures)
I shaped my ladder, and you shaped yours.

Whatever they are—they are what we made :
A ladder of light, or a ladder of shade,
A ladder of love, or a hateful thing,
A ladder of strength, or a wavering string.
A ladder of gold, or a ladder of straw,
Each is the ladder of righteous law.

We flung them away at the call of death,
We took them again with the next live breath.
For a keeper stands by the great birth-gates ;
As each soul passes, its ladder waits.
Though mine be narrow, and yours be broad,
On my ladder alone can I climb to God.
On your ladder alone can your feet ascend
For none may borrow, and none may lend.

If toil and trouble and pain are found,
Twisted and corded, to form each round,
If rusted iron or mouldering wood
Is the fragile frame, you must make it good.
You must build it over and fashion it strong,
Though the task be hard as your life is long ;
For up this ladder the pathway leads
To earthly pleasures and spirit needs ;
And all that may come in another way
Shall be but illusion, and will not stay.

In useless effort, then, waste no time ;
Rebuild your ladder, and climb and climb.

WHO IS A CHRISTIAN?

WHO is a Christian in this Christian land
Of many churches and of lofty spires?
Not he who sits in soft upholstered pews
Bought by the profits of unholy greed,
And looks devotion, while he thinks of gain.
Not he who sends petitions from the lips
That lie to-morrow in the street and mart.
Not he who fattens on another's toil,
And flings his unearned riches to the poor,
Or aids the heathen with a lessened wage,
And builds cathedrals with an increased rent.

Christ, with Thy great, sweet, simple creed of love,
How must Thou weary of Earth's "Christian" clans,
Who preach salvation through Thy saving blood
While planning slaughter of their fellow men.
Who is a Christian? It is one whose life
Is built on love, on kindness and on faith;
Who holds his brother as his other self;
Who toils for justice, equity and PEACE,
And hides no aim or purpose in his heart
That will not chord with universal good.

Though he be pagan, heretic or Jew,
That man is Christian and beloved of Christ.

THE GOAL

ALL your wonderful inventions,
All your houses vast and tall,
All your great gun-fronted vessels,
Every fort and every wall,
With the passing of the ages,
They shall pass and they shall fall.

As you sit among the idols
That your avarice gave birth,
As you count the hoarded treasures
That you think of priceless worth,
Time is digging tombs to hide them
In the bosom of the earth.

There shall come a great convulsion
Or a rushing tidal wave,
Or a sound of mighty thunders
From a subterranean cave,
And a boasting world's possessions
Shall be buried in one grave.

From the Centuries of Silence
We are bringing back again
Buried vase and bust and column
And the gods they worshipped then,
In the strange unmentioned cities
Built by prehistoric men.

Did they steal, and lie, and slaughter?
Did they steep their souls in shame?
Did they sell eternal virtues
Just to win a passing fame?
Did they give the gold of honour
For the tinsel of a name?

We are hurrying altogether
Toward the silence and the night;
There is nothing worth the seeking
But the sun-kissed moral height—
There is nothing worth the doing
But the doing of the *right*.

THE SPUR

I ASKED the rock beside the road what joy existence lent.
It answered, "For a million years my heart has been content."

I asked the truffle-seeking swine, as rooting by he went,
"What is the keynote of your life?" He grunted out, "Content."

I asked a slave, who toiled and sung, just what his singing meant.
He plodded on his changeless way, and said, "I am content."

I asked a plutocrat of greed, on what his thoughts were bent,
He chinked the silver in his purse, and said, "I am content.'

I asked the mighty forest tree from whence its force was sent.
Its thousand branches spoke as one, and said, "From discontent."

I asked the message speeding on, by what great law was rent
God's secret from the waves of space. It said, "From discontent."

I asked the marble, where the works of God and man were blent,
What brought the statue from the block. It answered, "Discontent."

I asked an angel, looking down on earth with gaze intent,
How man should rise to larger growth. Quoth he, "Through discontent."

AWAKENED!

SLOWLY the People waken: they have been,
Like weary soldiers, sleeping in their tents,
While traitors tiptoed through the silent camp

Intent on plunder. Suddenly a sound—
A careless movement of too bold a thief—
Starts one dull sleeper; then another stirs,
A third cries out a warning, and at last
The people are awake! Oh, when as one
The many rise, united and alert,
With Justice for their motto, they reflect
The mighty force of God's Omnipotence.
And nothing stands before them. Lusty Greed,
Tyrannical Corruption long in power,
And smirking Cant (whose right hand robs and slays
So that the left may dower Church and School),
Monopoly, whose mandate took from Toil
The Mother Earth, that Idleness might loll
And breed the Monster of Colossal Wealth—
All these must fall before the gathering Force
Of public indignation. That old strife
Which marks the progress of each century,
The war of Right with Might, is on once more,
And shame to him who does not take his stand.

This it the weightiest moment of all time,
And on the issues of the present hour
A nation's honour and a country's peace,
A People's future, ay, a World's, depends.

Until the vital questions of the day,
Are solved and settled, and the spendthrift thieves
Who rob the coffers of the saving poor
Are led from fashion's feasts to prison fare,

And taught the saving grace of honest work—
Till Labour claims the privilege of toil
And toil the proceeds of its labour shares—
Let no man sleep, let no man dare to sleep!

SHADOWS

I AM sorry in the gladness
  Of the joys that crown my days,
For the souls that sit in sadness
  Or walk uninviting ways

On the radiance of my labour
  That a loving fate bestowed,
Falls the shadow of my neighbour,
  Crushed beneath a thankless load.

As the canticle of pleasure
  From my lovelit altar rolls,
There is one discordant measure,
  As I think of homeless souls.

And I know that grim old story,
  Preached from pulpits, is not so,
For no God could sit in glory
  And see sinners writhe below.

In that great eternal Centre
  Where all human life has birth,
Boundless love and pity enter
  And flow downward to the earth.

And all souls in sin or sorrow
  Are but passing through the night,
And I know on some to-morrow
  God will love them into light.

THE NEW COMMANDMENT

"*Let go the Cross.*"—Gertrude Runshon.

I HEARD a strange voice in the distance calling
As from a star an echo might be falling.

It spoke four syllables, concise and brief,
Charged with a God-sent message of relief:

Let go the cross! Oh, you who cling to sorrow,
Hark to the new command and comfort borrow.

Even as the Master left His cross below
And rose to Paradise, let go, let go.

Forget your wrongs, your troubles and your losses,
For with the tools of thought we build our crosses.

Forget your griefs, all grudges and all fear
And enter Paradise—its gates are near.

Heaven is a realm by loving souls created,
And hell was fashioned by the hearts that hated.

Love, hope and trust; believe all joys are yours,
Life pays the soul whose confidence endures.

The blows of adverse fate, by larger pleasures,
As after storms the soil yields fuller measures.

Let go the cross; roll self—the stone—away
And dwell with Love in Paradise to-day.

SUMMER DREAMS

WHEN the Summer sun is shining,
And the green things push and grow,
Oft my heart runs over measure,
With its flowing fount of pleasure,
As I feel the sea winds blow;
Ah, then life is good, I know.

And I think of sweet birds building,
And of children fair and free;
And of glowing sun-kissed meadows,
And of tender twilight shadows,
And of boats upon the sea.
Oh, then life seems good to me!

Then unbidden and unwanted,
Come the darker, sadder sights;
City shop and stifling alley,
Where misfortune's children rally;
And the hot crime-breeding nights,
And the dearth of God's delights.

And I think of narrow prisons
  Where unhappy songbirds dwell,
And of cruel pens and cages
Where some captured wild thing rages
  Like a madman in his cell,
  In the Zoo, the wild beasts' hell.

And I long to lift the burden
  Of man's selfishness and sin;
And to open wide earth's treasures
Of God's storehouse, full of pleasures,
  For my dumb and human kin,
  And to ask the whole world in.

THE BREAKING OF CHAINS

BETWEEN the ringing of bells and the musical clan of chimes
I hear a sound like the breaking of chains, all through these Christmas times.
For the thought of the world is waking out of a slumber deep and long,
And the race is beginning to understand how Right can master Wrong.

And the eyes of the world are opening wide, and great are the truths they see;
And the heart of the world is singing a song, and its burden is "Be free!"

Now the thought of the world and the wish of the world and the song of the world will make
A force so strong that the fetters forged for a million years must break.

Fetters of superstitious fear have bound the race to creeds
That hindered the upward march of man to the larger faith he needs.
Fetters of greed and pride have made the race bow down to kings;
But the pompous creed and the costly throne must yield to simpler things.

The thought of the world has climbed above old paths for centuries trod;
And cloth and crown no longer mean the "vested power of God."
The race no longer bends beneath the weight of Adam's sin;
But stands erect and knows itself the Maker's first of kin.

And the need of the world and the wish of the world and the song of the world I hear,
All through the clanging and clashing of bells, this Christmas time o' the year;
And I hear a sound like the breaking of chains, and it seems to say to me,
In the voice of One who spoke of old, "The Truth shall make men free."

DECEMBER

UPON December's windy portico
The Old Year stood, and looked out where the sun
Went wading down the West, through drifting clouds.
"I, too, shall sink full soon to rest," he sighed,
"And follow where my children's feet have trod;
Brave January, beauteous May and June,
My lovely daughters, and my valiant sons,
All, all save one, have left me for that bourne
Men call the Past. It seems but yesterday
I saw fair August, laughing with the Sea,
Snaring the Earth with her seductive wiles,
And making conquest, even of the Sun.
Yet has she gone, and left me here to mourn."
Then spake December, from an open door:
"Father, the night grows cold; come in and rest.
Sit with me here beside this glowing grate;
I have not left thee; thou art not alone;
My house is thine; all warm with love and light,
And bright with holly and with cedar sweet.
My stalwart arm in thine to lean upon;
The feast is spread, I only wait for thee;
God smiles upon thy dead, smile thou on me."
Then through the open door the Old Year passed
And darkness settled on the outer world.

"THE WAY"

HOWEVER certain of the way thou art,
Take not the self-appointed leader's part,
Follow no man, and by no man be led,
And no man lead. *Awake*, and go ahead.
Thy path, though leading straight unto the goal,
Might prove confusing to another soul.
The goal is central; but from east, and west,
And north, and south, we set out on the quest;
From lofty mountains, and from valleys low:—
How could all find one common way to go?

Lord Buddha to the wilderness was brought,
Lord Jesus to the Cross. And yet, think not
By solitude, or cross, thou canst achieve,
Lest in thine own true Self thou dost believe.
Know thou art One, with life's Almighty Source,
Then are thy feet set on the certain Course.
Nor does it matter if thou feast, or fast,
Or what thy creed—or where thy lot is cast;
In halls of pleasure or in crowded mart,
In city streets, or from all men apart—
Thy path leads to the Light; and peace and power
Shall be thy portion, growing hour by hour.
Follow no man, and by no man be led.
And no man lead. But *know* and go ahead.

THE LEADER TO BE

WHAT shall the leader be in that great day
When we who sleep and dream that we are slaves
Shall wake and know that Liberty is ours?
Mark well that word—not yours, not mine, but ours.
For through the mingling of the separate streams
Of individual protest and desire,
In one united sea of purpose, lies
The course to Freedom.

When Progression takes
Her undisputed right of way, and sinks
The old traditions and conventions where
They may not rise, what shall the leader be?

No mighty warrior skilled in crafts of war,
Sowing earth's fertile furrows with dead men
And staining crimson God's cerulean sea,
To prove his prowess to a shuddering world.

Nor yet a monarch with a silly crown
Perched on an empty head, an in-bred heir
To senseless titles and anemic blood.

No ruler, purchased by the perjured votes
Of striving demagogues whose god is gold.
Not one of these shall lead to Liberty.

The weakness of the world cries out for strength.
The sorrow of the world cries out for hope.
Its suffering cries for kindness.

He who leads
Must then be strong and hopeful as the dawn
That rises unafraid and full of joy
Above the blackness of the darkest night.
He must be kind to every living thing;
Kind as the Krishna, Buddha and the Christ,
And full of love for all created life.
Oh, not in war shall his great prowess lie,
Nor shall he find his pleasure in the chase.
Too great for slaughter, friend of man and beast,
Touching the borders of the Unseen Realms
And bringing down to earth their mystic fires
To light our troubled pathways, wise and kind
And human to the core, so shall he be,
The coming leader of the coming time.

THE GREATER LOVE

HEAR thou my prayer, great God of opulence;
Give me no blessings, save as recompense
For blessings which I lovingly bestow
On needy stranger or on suffering foe.
If Wealth, by chance, should on my path appear,
Let Wisdom and Benevolence stand near,

And Charity within my portal wait,
To guard me from acquaintance intimate.

Yet in this intricate great art of living
Guide me away from misdirected giving,
And show me how to spur the laggard soul
To strive alone once more to gain the goal.

Repay my worldly efforts to attain
Only as I develop heart and brain;
Nor brand me with the "Dollar Sign" above
A bosom void of sympathy and love.

If on the carrying winds my name be blown
To any land or time beyond my own,
Let it not be as one who gained the day
By crowding others from the chosen way;
Rather as one who missed the highest place
Pausing to cheer spent runners in the race.
To do—to have—is lesser than to BE:
The greater boon I ask, dear God, from Thee.

THANK GOD FOR LIFE

THANK God for life, in such an age as this,
Rich with the promises of better things.
Thank God for being part of this great nation's heart,
Whose strong pulsations are not ruled by kings.

Our thanks for fearless and protesting speech
When cloven hoofs show 'neath the robes of state.
For us no servile song of "Kings can do no wrong."
Not royal birth, but worth, makes rulers great.

Thank God for peace within our border lands,
And for the love of peace within each soul.
Who thinks on peace has wrought, mosaic-squares of thought
In the foundation of our future goal.

Our thanks for love, and knowledge of love's laws.
Love is a greater power than vested might.
Love is the central source of all enduring force.
Love is the law that sets the whole world right.

Our thanks for that increasing torch of light
The tireless hand of science holds abroad.
And may its growing blaze shine on all hidden ways
Till man behold the silhouette of God.

TIME ENOUGH

I KNOW it is early morning,
And hope is calling aloud,
And your heart is afire with Youth's desire
To hurry along with the crowd.

But linger a bit by the roadside,
And lend a hand by the way,
'Tis a curious fact that a generous act
Brings leisure and luck to a day.

I know it is only the noontime—
There is chance enough to be kind;
But the hours run fast when noon has passed
And the shadows are close behind.
So think while the light is shining,
And act ere the set of the sun,
For the sorriest woe that a soul can know
Is to think what it might have done.

I know it is almost evening,
But the twilight hour is long.
If you listen and heed each cry of need
You can right full many a wrong.
For when we have finished the journey
We will all look back and say:
"On life's long mile there was nothing worth while
But the good we did by the way."

NEW YEAR'S DAY

WHEN with clanging and with ringing
Comes the year's initial day,
I can feel the rhythmic swinging
Of the world upon its way;

And though Right still wears a fetter
  And though Justice still is blind,
Time's beyond is always better
  Than the paths he leaves behind.

In our æons of existence,
  As we circle through the night,
We annihilate the distance
  'Twixt the darkness and the light.
From beginnings crude and lowly,
  Round and round our souls have trod
Through the circles, winding slowly
  Up to knowledge and to God.

With each century departed
  Some old evil found a tomb,
Some old truth was newly started
  In propitious soil to bloom.
With each epoch some condition
  That has handicapped the race
(Worn-out creed or superstition)
  Unto knowledge yields its place.

Though in folly and in blindness
  And in sorrow still we grope,
Yet in man's increasing kindness
  Lies the world's stupendous hope;
For our darkest hour of errors
  Is as radiant as the dawn,
Set beside the awful terrors
  Of the ages that have gone.

And above the sad world's sobbing,
  And the strife of clan with clan,
I can hear the mighty throbbing
  Of the heart of God in man ;
And a voice chants through the chiming
  Of the bells, and seems to say,
We are climbing, we are climbing,
  As we circle on our way.

IN AN OLD ART GALLERY

BEFORE the statue of a giant Hun,
  There stood a dwarf, misshapen and uncouth.
His lifted eyes seemed asking : " Why, in sooth,
Was I not fashioned like this mighty one ?
Would God show favour to an older son
  Like earthly kings, and beggar without ruth
  Another, who sinned only by his youth ?
Why should two lives in such divergence run ?"

Strange, as he gazed, that from a vanished past
  No memories revived of war and strife,
    Of misused prowess, and of broken law.
That old Hun's spirit, in the dwarf re-cast,
  Lived out the sequence of an earthly life.
    It was the statue of himself he saw !

TRUE BROTHERHOOD

GOD, what a world, if men in street and mart
Felt that same kinship of the human heart
Which makes them, in the face of flame and flood,
Rise to the meaning of true Brotherhood!

THE DECADENT

AMONG the virile hosts he passed along,
Conspicuous for an undetermined grace
Of sexless beauty. In his form and face
God's mighty purpose somehow had gone wrong.
Then on his loom, he wove a careful song,
Of sensuous threads; a wordy web of lace
Wherein the primal passions of the race
And his own sins made wonder for the throng.

A little pen prick opened up a vein,
And gave the finished mesh a crimson blot—
The last consummate touch of studied art.
But those who knew strong passion and keen pain,
Looked through and through the pattern and found not
One single great emotion of the heart.

LORD, SPEAK AGAIN

WHEN God had formed the Universe, He thought
Of all the marvels therein to be wrought
And to His aid then Motherhood was brought.

"My lesser self, the feminine of Me,
She will go forth throughout all time," quoth He,
"And make My world what I would have it be.

"For I am weary, having laboured so,
And for a cycle of repose would go
Into that silence which but God may know.

"Therefore I leave the rounding of My plan
To Motherhood; and that which I began
Let woman finish in perfecting man.

"She is the soil: the human Mother Earth:
She is the sun, that calls the seed to earth.
She is the gardener, who knows its worth.

"From Me, all seed, of any kind must spring.
Divine the growth such seed and soil will bring.
For all is Me, and I am everything."

Thus having spoken to Himself aloud,
His glorious face upon His breast He bowed,
And sought repose behind a wall of cloud.

Come forth, O God! though great Thy thought and
good,
In shaping woman for true Motherhood,
Lord, speak again; she has not understood.

The centuries pass: the cycles roll along—
The earth is peopled with a mighty throng,
Yet men are fighting and the world goes wrong.

Lord, speak again, ere yet it be too late,
Unloved, unwanted souls come through earth's gate:
The unborn child is given a dower of hate.

Thy world progresses in all ways save one.
In Motherhood, for which it was begun,
Lord, Lord, behold how little has been done!

Children are spawned like fishes in the sand.
With ignorance and crime they fill the land.
Lord, speak again, till mothers understand.

It is not all of Motherhood to know
Conception pleasure or deliverance woe.
Who plants the seed should help the shoot to grow.

Better a barren soil than weed and tare,
Or sickly plants that die for want of care
In poisonous jungles, void of sun and air.

True Motherhood is not alone to breed
The human race; it is to know and heed
Its holiest purpose and its highest need.

Lord, speak again, so woman shall be stirred
With the full meaning of that mighty word
True Motherhood. She has not rightly heard.

MY HEAVEN

UNHOUSED in deserts of accepted thought,
And lost in jungles of confusing creeds,
My soul strayed, homeless, finding its own needs
Unsatisfied with what tradition taught.

The pros and cons, the little ifs and ands,
The but and maybe, and the this and that,
On which the churches thicken and grow fat,
I found but structures built on shifting sands.

And all their heavens were strange and far away,
And all their hells were made of human hate;
And since for death I did not care to wait,
A heaven I fashioned for myself one day.

Of happy thoughts I built it stone by stone,
With joy of life I draped each spacious room,
With love's great light I drove away all gloom,
And in the centre I made God a throne.

And this dear heaven I set within my heart,
And carried it about with me alway,
And then the changing dogmas of the day
Seemed alien to my thoughts and held no part.

Now as I take my heaven from place to place
I find new rooms by love's revealing light,
And death will give me but a larger sight
To see my palace spreading into space.

LIFE

ON a bleak, bald hill with a dull world under,
The dreary world of the Commonplace,
I have stood when the whole world seemed a blunder
Of dotard Time, in an aimless race.
With worry about me and want before me—
Yet deep in my soul was a rapture spring
That made me cry to the grey sky o'er me:
"Oh, I know this life is a goodly thing!"

I have given sweet years to a thankless duty
While cold and starving, though clothed and fed,
For a young heart's hunger for joy and beauty
Is harder to bear than the need of bread.
I have watched the wane of a sodden season,
Which let hope wither, and made care thrive,
And through it all, without earthly reason,
I have thrilled with the glory of being alive.

And now I stand by the great sea's splendour,
Where love and beauty feed heart and eye.
The brilliant light of the sun grows tender
As it slants to the shore of the by and by.

I prize each hour as a golden treasu
A pearl Time drops from a broken string :
And all my ways are the ways of pleasure,
And I know this life is a goodly thing.

And I know, too, that not in the seeing,
Or having, or doing the things we would,
Lies that deep rapture that comes from being
At one with the Purpose which made all good.
And not from Pleasure the heart may borrow
That rare contentment for which we strive,
Unless through trouble, and want, and sorrow
It has thrilled with the glory of being alive.

GOD'S KIN

THERE is no summit you may not attain,
No purpose which you may not yet achieve,
If you will wait serenely and believe
Each seeming loss is but a step toward gain.

Between the mountain-tops lie vale and plain ;
Let nothing make you question, doubt or grieve ;
Give only good, and good alone receive ;
And as you welcome joy, so welcome pain.

That which you most desire awaits your word ;
Throw wide the door and bid it enter in.

Speak, and the strong vibrations shall be stirred;
Speak, and above earth's loud, unmeaning din
Your silent declarations shall be heard.
All things are possible to God's own kin.

CONQUEST

TALK not of strength, until your heart has known
And fought with weakness through long hours alone.

Talk not of virtue, till your conquering soul
Has met temptation and gained full control.

Boast not of garments, all unscorched by sin,
Till you have passed, unscathed, through fires within.

Oh, poor that pride the unscarred soldier shows,
Who safe in camp, has never faced his foes.

THE STATUE

A GRANITE rock in the mountain side
Gazed on the world and was satisfied.
It watched the centuries come and go.
It welcomed the sunlight, yet loved the snow.
It grieved when the forest was forced to fall,
Yet joyed when steeples rose, white and tall,

In the valley below it, and thrilled to hear
The voice of the great town roaring near.

When the mountain stream from its idle play
Was caught by the mill wheel and borne away
And trained to labour, the grey rock mused
"Trees and verdure and stream are used
By Man the Master; but I remain
Friend of the mountain, and star, and plain,
Unchanged forever by God's decree,
While passing centuries bow to me."

Then all unwarned, with a mighty shock
Out of the mountain was wrenched the rock.
Bruised and battered and broken in heart,
It was carried away to the common mart,
Wrecked and ruined in piece and pride.
"Oh, God is cruel," the granite cried,
"Comrade of mountains, of stars the friend,
By all deserted, how sad my end."

A dreaming sculptor in passing by
Gazed at the granite with thoughtful eye.
Then stirred with a purpose supremely grand
He bade his dream in the rock expand.
And lo! from the broken and shapeless mass
That grieved and doubted, it came to pass
That a glorious statue of priceless worth
And infinite beauty, adorned the earth.

SIRIUS

"*Since Sirius crossed the Milky Way, sixty thousand years have gone!*"—GARRETT P. SERVISS.

SINCE Sirius crossed the Milky Way
Full sixty thousand years have gone,
Yet hour by hour, and day by day,
This tireless star speeds on and on.

Methinks he must be moved to mirth
By that droll tale of Genesis,
Which says creation had its birth
For such a puny world as this.

To hear how One who fashioned all—
Those Solar Systems, tier on tiers,
Expressed in little Adam's fall
The purpose of a million spheres.

And, witness of the endless plan,
To splendid wrath he must be wrought
By pigmy creeds presumptuous man
Sends forth, as God's primeval thought.

Perchance from half a hundred stars
He hears as many curious things;
From Venus, Jupiter and Mars,
And Saturn with the beauteous rings,

There may be students of the Cause
Who send their revelations out,
And formulate their codes of laws
With heavens for faith and hells for doubt.

On planets old ere form or place
Was lent to earth, may dwell—who knows—
A God-like and perfected race
That hails great Sirius as he goes.

In zones that circle moon and sun,
'Twixt world and world, he may see souls
Whose span of earthly life is done
Still journeying up to higher goals.

And on dead planets grey and cold
Grim spectral souls, that harboured hate
Life after life, he may behold
Descending to a darker fate.

And on his grand majestic course
He may have caught one glorious sight
Of that vast shining central Source
From which proceeds all Life, all Light.

Since Sirius crossed the Milky Way
Full sixty thousand years have gone,
No mortal man may bid him stay,
No mortal man may speed him on.

No mortal mind may comprehend
What is beyond, what was before;
To God be glory without end,
Let man be humble and adore.

AT FONTAINEBLEAU

AT Fontainebleau, I saw a little bed
Fashioned of polished wood, with gold ornate,
Ambition, hope, and sorrow, ay, and hate
Once battled there, above a childish head,
And there in vain, grief wept, and memory plead
It was so small! but ah, dear God, how great
The part it played in one sad woman's fate,
How wide the gloom, that narrow object shed.

The symbol of an over-reaching aim,
The emblem of a devastated joy,
It spoke of glory, and a blasted home:
Of fleeting honours, and disordered fame,
And the lone passing of a fragile boy.

It was the cradle of the King of Rome.

THE MASQUERADE

LOOK in the eyes of trouble with a smile,
Extend your hand and do not be afraid.
'Tis but a friend who comes to masquerade
And test your faith and courage for awhile.

Fly, and he follows fast with threat and jeer.
Shrink, and he deals hard blow on stinging blow,
But bid him welcome as a friend, and lo!
The jest is off—the masque will disappear.

SYMPATHY

IS the way hard and thorny, oh, my brother?
Do tempests beat, and adverse wild winds blow?
And are you spent, and broken, at each nightfall,
Yet with each morn you rise and onward go?
Brother, I know, I know!
I, too, have journeyed so.

Is your heart mad with longing, oh, my sister?
Are all great passions in your breast aglow?
Does the white wonder of your own soul blind you,
And are you torn with rapture and with woe?
Sister, I know, I know!
I, too, have suffered so.

Is the road filled with snare and quicksand, pilgrim?
Do pitfalls lie where roses seem to grow?
And have you sometimes stumbled in the darkness,
And are you bruised and scarred by many a blow?
Pilgrim, I know, I know!
I, too, have stumbled so.

Do you send out rebellious cry and question,
As mocking hours pass silently and slow.
Does your insistent "wherefore" bring no answer,
While stars wax pale with watching and droop low?
I, too, have questioned so,
But now *I know, I know!*
To toil, to strive, to err, to cry, to grow,
To love through all—this is the way to *know.*

INTERMEDIARY

WHEN from the prison of its body free,
My soul shall soar, before it goes to Thee,
Thou great Creator, give it power to know
The language of all sad, dumb things below.
And let me dwell a season still on earth
Before I rise to some diviner birth:
Invisible to men, yet seen and heard,
And understood by sorrowing beast and bird—
Invisible to men, yet always near,
To whisper counsel in the human ear:

And with a spell to stay the hunter's hand
And stir his heart to know and understand;
To plant within the dull or thoughtless mind
The great religious impulse to be kind.

Before I prune my spirit wings and rise
To seek my loved ones in their paradise,
Yea! even before I hasten on to see
That lost child's face, so like a dream to me,
I would be given this intermediate rôle,
And carry comfort to each poor dumb soul:
And bridge man's gulf of cruelty and sin
By understanding of his lower kin.
'Twixt weary driver and the straining steed
On wings of mercy would my spirit speed.
And each should know, before his journey's end,
That in the other dwelt a loving friend.
From zoo and jungle, and from cage and stall,
I would translate each inarticulate call,
Each pleading look, each frenzied act and cry,
And tell the story to each passer-by;
And of a spirit's privilege possessed,
Pursue indifference to its couch of rest,
And whisper in its ear until in awe
It woke and knew God's all-embracing law
Of Universal Life—the One in All.

. . . .

Lord, let this mission to my lot befall.

LIFE'S CAR

"HURRY up!"
No lingering by old doors of doubt—
No loitering by the way,
No waiting a To-morrow car,
When you can board To-day.
Success is somewhere down the track;
Before the chance is gone
Accelerate your laggard pace,
Swing on, I say, swing on—
Hurry up!

"Step lively!"
Belated souls are following fast,
They shout and signal, "Wait."
Conductor Time brooks no delay,
He rings the bell of Fate.
But you can give the man behind,
With one hand on the bar,
A final chance to brook defeat,
And board the moving car.
Step lively!

"Move up!"
Make way for others as you sit
Or stand. This crowded earth
Has room for every journeying soul
En route to higher birth.

Ay, room and comfort, if no one
Took double share or space,
Nor let his greed and selfishness
Absorb another's place.
Move up!

"Hold fast!"
The jolting switch of obstacles
With jarring rails is near.
Stand firm of foot, be strong of grip,
Brace well and have no fear.
The Maker of the Car of Life
Foresaw that curve—Despair,
And hung the straps of faith, and hope,
So you might grasp them there.
Hold fast!

OPPORTUNITY

SEND forth your heart's desire, and work and wait;
The opportunities of life are brought
To our own doors, not by capricious fate,
But by the strong compelling force of thought.

THE AGE OF MOTORED THINGS

THE wonderful age of the world I sing—
The age of battery, coil and spring,
Of steam, and storage, and motored thing.

Though faith may slumber and art seem dead,
And all that is spoken has once been said,
And all that is written were best unread;

Though hearts are iron and thoughts are steel,
And all that has value is mercantile,
Yet marvellous truths shall the age reveal.

Ay, greater the marvels this age shall find
Than all the centuries left behind,
When faith was a bigot and art was blind.

Oh, sorry the search of the world for gods,
Through faith that slaughters and art that lauds,
While reason sits on its throne and nods.

But out of the leisure that men will know,
When the cruel things of the sad earth go,
A Faith that is Knowledge shall rise and grow.

In the throb and whir of each new machine
Thinner is growing the veil between
The visible earth and the worlds unseen.

The True Religion shall leisure bring;
And Art shall awaken and Love shall sing:
Oh, ho! for the age of the motored thing!

NEW YEAR

MORTAL:

"THE night is cold, the hour is late, the world is bleak and drear;
Who is it knocking at my door?"

THE NEW YEAR:

"I am Good Cheer."

MORTAL:

"Your voice is strange; I know you not; in shadows dark I grope.
What seek you here?"

THE NEW YEAR:

"Friend, let me in; my name is Hope."

MORTAL:

"And mine is Failure; you but mock the life you seek to bless.
Pass on."

THE NEW YEAR:

"Nay, open wide the door; I am Success."

MORTAL:

"But I am ill and spent with pain; too late has come your wealth.
I cannot use it."

THE NEW YEAR:

"Listen, friend; I am Good Health."

MORTAL:

"Now, wide I fling my door. Come in, and your fair statements prove."

THE NEW YEAR:

"But you must open, too, your heart, for I am Love."

DISARMAMENT

WE have outgrown the helmet and cuirass,
The spear, the arrow, and the javelin,
These crude inventions of a cruder age,
When men killed men to show their love of God,
And he who slaughtered most was greatest king.
We have outgrown the need of war!
Should men
Unite in this one thought, all war would end.

Disarm the world; and let all Nations meet
Like Men, not monsters, when disputes arise.
When crossed opinions tangle into snarls,
Let Courts untie them, and not armies cut.
When State discussions breed dissensions, let
Union and Arbitration supersede
The hell-created implements of War.

Disarm the world! and bid destructive thought
Slip like a serpent from the mortal mind
Down through the marshes of oblivion. Soon
A race of gods shall rise! Disarm! Disarm!

THE CALL

ALL wantonly in hours of joy,
I made a song of pain.
Soon Grief drew near, and paused to hear,
And sang the sad refrain,
Again and yet again.

Then recklessly in my despair,
I sang of hope one day.
And Joy turned back upon life's track,
And smiled, and came my way,
And sat her down to stay.

A LITTLE SONG

OH, a great world, a fair world, a true world I find
it;
A sun that never forgets to rise,
On the darkest night, a star in the skies,
And a God of love behind it.

Oh, a good life, a sweet life, a large life I take it,
Is what He offers to you, and me;
A chance to do, and a chance to be,
Whatever we chose to make it.

Oh, a far way, a high way, a sure way He leads us;
And if the journey at times seems long,
We must trudge ahead, with a trustful song,
And know at the end He needs us.

NEW THOUGHT PASTELS

A DIALOGUE

MORTAL

THE world is full of selfishness and greed
Lord, I would lave its sin.

SPIRIT

Yea, mortal, earth of thy good help has need.
Go cleanse *thyself* within.

MORTAL

Mine ear is hurt by harsh and evil speech.
I would reform men's ways.

SPIRIT

There is but one convincing way to teach.
Speak *thou* but words of praise.

MORTAL

On every hand is wretchedness and grief,
Despondency and fear.
Lord, I would give my fellow-men relief.

SPIRIT

Be, then, all hope, all cheer.

MORTAL

Lord, I look outward and grow sick at heart,
Such need of change I see.

SPIRIT

Mortal, look *in*. Do thy allotted part,
And leave the rest to ME.

THE WEED

A WEED is but an unloved flower!
Go dig, and prune, and guide, and wait
Until it learns its high estate,
And glorifies some bower.
A weed is but an unloved flower!

All sin is virtue unevolved,
Release the angel from the clod—
Go love thy brother up to God.
Behold each problem solved.
All sin is virtue unevolved.

STRENGTH

WHO is the strong? Not he who puts to test
His sinews with the strong and proves the best;
But he who dwells where weaklings congregate,
And never lets his splendid strength abate.

Who is the good? Not he who walks each day
With moral men along the high, clean way;
But he who jostles gilded sin and shame,
Yet will not sell his honour or his name.

Who is the wise? Not he who from the start
With Wisdom's followers has taken part;
But he who looks in Folly's tempting eyes,
And turns away, perceiving her disguise.

Who is serene? Not he who flees his kind,
Some mountain fastness, or some cave to find;
But he who in the city's busiest scene,
Keeps calm within—he only is serene.

AFFIRM

BODY and mind and spirit, all combine
To make the Creature, human and divine.

Of this great trinity no part deny.
Affirm, affirm, the Great Eternal I.

Affirm the body, beautiful and whole,
The earth-expression of immortal soul.

Affirm the mind, the messenger of the hour,
To speed between thee and the source of power.

Affirm the spirit, the Eternal I—
Of this great trinity no part deny.

THE CHOSEN

THEY stood before the Angel at the gate;
The Angel asked: "Why should you enter in?"
One said: "On earth my place was high and great;"
And one: "I warned my fellow-men from sin;"
Another: "I was teacher of the faith;
I scorned my life and lived in love with death."

And one stood silent. "Speak!" the Angel said;
"What earthly deed has sent you here to-day?"
"Alas! I did but follow where they led,"
He answered sadly: "I had lost my way—
So new the country, and so strange my flight;
I only sought for guidance and for light."

"You have no passport?" "None," the answer came.
"I loved the earth, tho' lowly was my lot.
I strove to keep my record free from blame,
And make a heaven about my humble spot.

A narrow life ; I see it now, too late ;
So, Angel, drive me from the heavenly gate."

The Angel swung the portal wide and free,
And took the sorrowing stranger by the hand.
"Nay, you alone," he said, "shall come with me,
Of all this waiting and insistent band.
Of what God gave, you built your paradise ;
Behold your mansion waiting in the skies."

THE NAMELESS

UNNUMBERED gods may unremembered die ;
A thousand creeds may perish and pass by ;
Yet do I lift mine eyes to ONE on high.

Unnamed be HE from whom creation came ;
There is no word whereby to speak His name
But petty men have mouthed it into shame.

I lift mine eyes, and with a river's force
My love's full tide goes sweeping on its course
To that supreme and all-embracing Source.

Then back through all those thirsting channels roll
The mighty billows of the Over Soul.
And I am He, the portion and the Whole.

As little streams before the flood-tide flee,
As rivers vanish to become the sea,
The I exists no more, for I AM HE.

THE WORD

OH, a word is a gem, or a stone, or a song,
Or a flame, or a two-edged sword :
Or a rose in bloom, or a sweet perfume,
Or a drop of gall, is a word.

You may choose your word like a connoisseur,
And polish it up with art,
But the word that sways, and stirs, and stays,
Is the word that comes from the heart.

You may work on your word a thousand weeks,
But it will not glow like one
That all unsought, leaps forth white hot,
When the fountains of feeling run.

You may hammer away on the anvil of thought,
And fashion your word with care,
But unless you are stirred to the depths, that word
Shall die on the empty air.

For the word that comes from the brain alone,
Alone to the brain will speed ;
But the word that sways, and stirs, and stays,
Oh ! that is the word men heed.

ASSISTANCE

LEAN on no mortal, Love, and serve ;
(For service is love's complement)
But it was never God's intent,
Your spirit from its path should swerve,
To gain another's point of view.
As well might Jupiter, or Mars
Go seeking help from other stars,
Instead of sweeping ON, as you.
Look to the Great Eternal Cause
And not to any man, for light.
Look in ; and learn the wrong, and right,
From your own soul's unwritten laws.
And when you question, or demur,
Let love be your Interpreter.

"CREDULITY"

IF fallacies come knocking at my door,
I'd rather feed, and shelter full a score,
Than hide behind the black portcullis, doubt,
And run the risk of barring one Truth out.

And if pretension for a time deceive,
And prove me one too ready to believe,
Far less my shame, than if by stubborn act,
I brand as lie, some great colossal Fact.

On my soul's door, the latch-string hangs outside ;
Within, the lighted candle. Let me guide
Some errant follies, on their wandering way,
Rather, than Wisdom give no welcoming ray.

CONSCIOUSNESS

GOD, what a glory, is this consciousness,
Of life on life, that comes to those who seek!
Nor would I, if I might, to others speak,
The fulness of that knowledge. It can bless,
Only the eager souls, that willing press
Along the mountain passes to the peak,
Not to the dull, the doubting or the weak,
Will Truth explain, or Mystery confess.

Not to the curious or impatient soul
That in the start, demands the end be shown,
And at each step, stops waiting for a sign ;
But to the tireless toiler toward the goal,
Shall the great miracles of God be known
And life revealed, immortal and divine.

THE STRUCTURE

UPON the wreckage of thy yesterday,
Design the structure of to-morrow. Lay
Strong corner stones of purpose, and prepare
Great blocks of wisdom, cut from past despair.

Shape mighty pillars of resolve, to set
Deep in the tear-wet mortar of regret.
Work on with patience. Though thy toil be slow,
Yet day by day the edifice shall grow.
Believe in God—in thine own self believe.
All that thou hast desired thou shalt achieve.

OUR SOULS

OUR souls should be vessels receiving
The waters of love for relieving
The sorrows of men.

For here lies the pleasure of living:
In taking God's bounties, and giving
The gifts back again.

THE LAW

WHEN the great universe was wrought
To might and majesty from naught,
The all-creative force was—
Thought.

That force is thine. Though desolate
The way may seem, command thy fate.
Send forth thy thought—
Create—*Create!*

KNOWLEDGE

WOULD you believe in Presences Unseen—
In life beyond this earthy life? BE STILL:
Be stiller yet! and listen. Set the screen
Of silence at the portal of your will.
Relax, and let the world go by unheard.
And seal your lips with some all-sacred word.

Breathe "God," in any tongue—it means the same;
LOVE ABSOLUTE: Think, feel, absorb the thought;
Shut out all else; until a subtle flame
(A spark from God's creative centre caught)
Shall permeate your being, and shall glow,
Increasing in its splendour, till, YOU KNOW.

Not in a moment, or an hour, or day
The knowledge comes; the power is far too great,
To win in any desultory way.
No soul is worthy till it learns to wait.
Day after day be patient, then, oh, soul;
Month after month—till, lo! the goal! the goal!

GIVE

GIVE, and thou shalt receive. Give thoughts of cheer,
Of courage and success, to friend and stranger.
And from a thousand sources, far and near,
Strength will be sent thee in thy hour of danger.

Give words of comfort, of defence, and hope,
To mortals crushed by sorrow and by error.
And though thy feet through shadowy paths may grope,
Thou shalt not walk in loneliness or terror.

Give of thy gold, though small thy portion be.
Gold rusts and shrivels in the hand that keeps it.
It grows in one that opens wide and free.
Who sows his harvest is the one who reaps it.

Give of thy love, nor wait to know the worth
Of what thou lovest ; and ask no returning.
And wheresoe'er thy pathway leads on earth,
There thou shalt find the lamp of love-light burning.

PERFECTION

THE leaf that ripens only in the sun
Is dull and shrivelled ere its race is run.
The leaf that makes a carnival of death
Must tremble first before the north wind's breath

The life that neither grief nor burden knows
Is dwarfed in sympathy before its close,
The life that grows majestic with the years
Must taste the bitter tonic found in tears.

FEAR

FEAR is the twin of Faith's sworn foe, Distrust.
If one breaks in your heart the other must.

Fear is the open enemy of Good.
It means the God in man misunderstood.

Who walks with Fear adown life's road will meet
His boon companions, Failure and Defeat.

But look the bully boldly in the eyes,
With mien undaunted, and he turns and flies.

THE WAY

BETWEEN the finite and the infinite
The missing link of Love has left a void.
Supply the link, and earth with Heaven will join
In one continued chain of endless life.

Hell is wherever Love is not, and Heaven
Is Love's location. No dogmatic creed,

No austere faith based on ignoble fear
Can lead thee into realms of joy and peace.
Unless the humblest creatures on the earth
Are bettered by thy loving sympathy
Think not to find a Paradise beyond.

There is no sudden entrance into Heaven.
Slow is the ascent by the path of Love.

UNDERSTOOD

I VALUE more than I despise
My tendency to sin,
Because it helps me sympathise
With all my tempted kin.

He who has nothing in his soul
That links him to the sod,
Knows not that joy of self-control
Which lifts him up to God.

And I am glad my heart can say,
When others trip and fall
(Although I safely passed that way),
"I understand it all."

HIS MANSION

THERE was a thought he hid from all men's
eyes,
And by his prudent life and deeds of worth.
He left a goodly record upon earth
As one both pure and wise.

But when he reached a dark unsightly door
Beyond the grave, there stood his secret thought.
It was the mansion he had built and brought
To dwell in, on that shore.

EFFECT

AN unkind tale was whispered in his ear,
He paused to hear.
His thoughts were food that helped a falsehood thrive,
And keep alive.

Years dawned and died. One day by venom's tongue
His name was stung.
He cried aloud, nor dreamed the lie was spawn
Of thoughts long gone.

Each mental wave we send out from the mind,
Or base, or kind,
Completes its circuit, then with added force
Seeks its own source.

THREE THINGS

KNOW this, ye restless denizens of earth,
Know this, ye seekers after joy and mirth,
Three things there are, eternal in their worth.

Love that outreaches to the humblest things;
Work that is glad, in what it does and brings;
And faith that soars upon unwearied wings.

Divine the Powers that on this trio wait.
Supreme their conquest, over Time and Fate.
Love, Work, and Faith—these three alone are great.

OBSTACLES

"The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the street."—PROVERBS xxvi. 13.

THERE are no lions in the street;
No lions in the way.
Go seek the goal, thou slothful soul,
Awake, awake, I say.

Thou dost but dream of obstacles;
In God's great lexicon,
That word illstarred, no page has marred
Press on, I say, press on.

Nothing can keep thee from thine own
But thine own slothful mind.
To one who knocks, each door unlocks;
And he who seeks, shall find

PRAYER

LEAN on thyself until thy strength is tried;
Then ask God's help; it will not be denied.

Use thine own sight to see the way to go;
When darkness falls ask God the path to show.

Think for thyself and reason out thy plan;
God has His work and thou hast thine, oh, man.

Exert thy will and use it for control;
God gave thee jurisdiction of thy soul.

All thine immortal powers bring into play;
Think, act, strive, reason, then look up and pray.

CLIMBING

WHO climbs the mountain does not always climb.
The winding road slants downward many a time;
Yet each descent is higher than the last.
Has thy path fallen? That will soon be past.
Beyond the curve the way leads up and on.
Think not thy goal for ever lost or gone.
Keep moving forward; if thine aim is right
Thou canst not miss the shining mountain height.
Who would attain to summits still and fair,
Must nerve himself through valleys of despair.

"THERE IS NO DEATH, THERE ARE NO DEAD."

(Suggested by the book of Mr. Ed. C. Randall.)

"THERE is no death, there are no dead."
From zone to zone, from sphere to sphere,
The souls of all who pass from here
By hosts of living thoughts are led;
And dark or bright, those souls must tread
The paths they fashioned year on year.
For hells are built of hate or fear,
And heavens of love our lives have shed.

Across unatlassed worlds of space,
And through God's mighty universe,
With thoughts that bless or thoughts that curse,
Each journeys to his rightful place.
Oh, greater truth no man hath said—
"There is no death, there are no dead."

It lifts the mourner from the sod,
And bids him cast away the reed
Of some uncomforting poor creed,
And walk with Knowledge for a rod.
It bids the doubter seek the broad
Vast fields, where living facts will feed
All those whose patience proves their need
Of these immortal truths of God.

It brings before the eyes of faith
Those realms of radiance, tier on tier,
Where our beloved "dead" appear,
More beautiful because of "death."
It speaks to grief: "Be comforted;
There is no death, there are no dead."

REALISATION

HERS was a lonely, shadowed lot;
Or so the unperceiving thought,
Who looked no deeper than her face,
Devoid of chiselled lines of grace—
No farther than her humble grate,
And wondered how she bore her fate.

Yet she was neither lone nor sad;
So much of love her spirit had,
She found an ever-flowing spring
Of happiness in everything.

So near to her was Nature's heart
It seemed a very living part
Of her own self—and bud and blade,
And heat and cold, and sun and shade,
And dawn and sunset, Spring and Fall,
Held raptures for her, one and all.

The year's four changing seasons brought
To her own door what thousands sought
In wandering ways and did not find—
Diversion and content of mind.

She loved the tasks that filled each day—
Such menial duties ; but her way
Of looking at them lent a grace
To things the world deemed commonplace.

Obscure and without place or name,
She gloried in another's fame.
Poor, plain and humble in her dress,
She thrilled when beauty and success
And wealth passed by, on pleasure bent ;
They made earth seem so opulent.
Yet none of quicker sympathy,
When need or sorrow came, than she.
And so she lived, and so she died.

She woke as from a dream. How wide
And wonderful the avenue
That stretched to her astonished view !
And up the green ascending lawn
A palace caught the rays of dawn.
Then suddenly the silence stirred
With one clear keynote of a bird ;
A thousand answered, till ere long
The air was quivering bits of song.
She rose and wandered forth in awe,
Amazed and moved by all she saw,

For, like so many souls who go
Away from earth, she did not know
The cord was severed.

Down the street,
With eager arms stretched forth to greet
Came one she loved and mourned in youth;
Her mother followed; then the truth
Broke on her, golden wave on wave,
Of knowledge infinite. The grave,
The body and the earthly sphere
Were gone! Immortal life was here!
They led her through the Palace halls;
From gleaming mirrors on the walls
She saw herself, with radiant mien,
And robed in splendour like a queen,
While glory round about her shone.
"All this," Love murmured, "is your own."
And when she gazed with wondering eye,
And questioned whence and where and why,
Love answered thus: "All Heaven is made
By thoughts on earth; your walls were laid,
Year after year, of purest gold;
The beauty of your mind behold
In this fair palace; ay, and more
Waits farther on, so vast your store.
I was not worthy when I died
To take my place here at your side;

I toiled through long and weary years
From lower planes to these high spheres ;
And through the love you sent from earth
I have attained a second birth.
Oft when my erring soul would tire
I felt the strength of your desire ;
I heard you breathe my name in prayer,
And courage conquered weak despair.
Ah ! earth needs heaven, but heaven indeed
Of earth has just as great a need."

Across the terrace with a bound
There sped a lambkin and a hound
(Dumb comrades of the old earth land)
And fondled her caressing hand.
"YOU LOVED THEM INTO PARADISE"
Was answered to her questioning eyes ;
"You taught them love ; love has no end !
Nor does love's life on form depend.
If there be mortal without love,
He wakes to no new life above.
If love in humbler things exist,
It must through other realms persist
Until all love rays merge in HIM.
Hark ! Hear the heavenly Cherubim !"
Then hushed and awed, with joy so vast
It knew no future and no past,
She stood amidst the radiant throng
That came to swell love's welcoming song—

This humble soul from earth's far coast
The centre of the heavenly host.

On earth they see her grave and say:
"She lies there till the judgment day;"
Nor dream, so limited their thought,
What miracles by love are wrought.

POEMS OF EXPERIENCE

THE EMPTY BOWL

I HELD the golden vessel of my soul
And prayed that God would fill it from on high.
Day after day the importuning cry
Grew stronger—grew, a heaven-accusing dole
Because no sacred waters laved my bowl.
"So full the fountain, Lord, wouldst Thou deny
The little needed for a soul's supply?
I ask but this small portion of Thy whole."
Then from the vast invisible Somewhere,
A voice, as one love-authorised by Him,
Spake, and the tumult of my heart was stilled.
"Who wants the waters must the bowl prepare;
Pour out the self that chokes it to the brim,
But emptied vessels, from the source are filled."

KEEP GOING

IS the goal distant, and troubled the road,
And the way long?
And heavy your load?
Then gird up your courage, and say "I am strong,"
And keep going.

Is the work weary, and endless the grind
And petty the pay?
Then brace up your mind
And say "Something better is coming my way,"
And keep doing.

Is the drink bitter life pours in your cup—
Is the taste gall?
Then smile and look up
And say "God is with me whatever befall,"
And keep trusting.

Is the heart heavy with hope long deferred,
And with prayers that seem vain?
Keep saying the word—
And that which you strive for you yet shall attain.
Keep praying.

A PRAYER

JUST as I shape the purport of my thought,
Lord of the Universe, shape Thou my lot.
Let each ill thought that in my heart may be,
Mould circumstance and bring ill luck to me.

Until I weed the garden of my mind
From all that is unworthy and unkind,
Am I not master of my mind, dear Lord?
Then as I *think*, so must be my reward.

Who sows in weakness, cannot reap in strength,
That which we plant, we gather in at length.
Great God of Justice, be Thou just to me,
And as my thoughts, so let my future be.

THE LONDON "BOBBY"

TRIBUTE TO THE POLICEMEN OF ENGLAND'S CAPITAL

HERE in my cosy corner,
Before a blazing log,
I'm thinking of cold London
Wrapped in its killing fog;
And, like a shining beacon
Above the picture grim,
I see the London "Bobby,"
And sing my song for him.

I see his stalwart figure,
I see his kindly face,
I hear his helpful answer
At any hour or place.
For, though you seek some by-way
Long miles from his own beat,
He tells you all about it,
And how to find the street.

He looks like some bold Viking,
This king of earth's police—
Yet in his voice lies feeling,
And in his eye lies peace;
He knows and does his duty—
(What higher praise is there?)
And London's lords and paupers
Alike receive his care.

He has a regal bearing,
Yet one that breathes repose;
It is the look and manner
Of one who *thinks* and *knows*.
Oh, men who govern nations,
In old worlds or in new,
Turn to the London "Bobby"
And learn a thing or two.

READ AT THE BENEFIT OF CLARA MORRIS

(AMERICA'S GREAT EMOTIONAL ACTRESS)

THE Radiant Rulers of Mystic Regions
Where souls of artists are fitted for birth
Gathered together their lovely legions
And fashioned a woman to shine on earth.
They bathed her in splendour,
They made her tender,

They gave her a nature both sweet and wild;
They gave her emotions like storm-stirred oceans,
And they gave her the heart of a little child.

These Radiant Rulers (who are not human
Nor yet divine like the gods above)
Poured all their gifts in the soul of woman,
That fragile vessel meant only for love.
    Still more they taught her,
    Still more they brought her,
Till they gave her the world for a harp one day:
    And they bade her string it,
    They bade her ring it,
While the stars all wondered to hear her play.

She touched the strings in a master fashion,
She uttered the cry of a world's despair:
Its long hid secret, its pent-up passion,
She gave to the winds in a vibrant air.
    For oh! the heart of her,
    That was the art of her.
Great with the feeling that makes men kin.
    Art unapproachable,
    Art all uncoachable,
Fragrance and flame from the spirit within.

The earth turns ever an ear unheeding
To the sorrows of art, as it cries "encore."

And she played on the harp till her hands were
bleeding,
And her brow was bruised by the laurels she wore.
She knew the trend of it,
She knew the end of it—
Men heard the music and men felt the thrill.
Bound to the altar
Of art, could she falter?
Then came a silence—the music was still.

And yet in the echoes we seem to hear it;
In waves unbroken it circles the earth:
And we catch in the light of her dauntless spirit
A gleam from the centre that gave her birth.
Still is the fame of her
Felt in the name of her—
But low lies the harp that once thrilled to her strain;
No hand has taken it,
No hand can waken it—
For the soul of her art was her secret of pain.

TWO GHOSTS

TWO dead men boarded a spectral ship
In the astral Port of Space;
On that ghost-filled barque, they met in the dark,
And halted, face to face.

"Now whither away?"—called one of the ghosts,
"This ship sets sail for Earth.
On the astral plane you must remain,
Where the newly dead have birth."

"But I could not stay and I would not stay,"
The other ghost replied;
"I must hurry back to the old Earth track
And stand at my loved one's side.

"She weeps for me in her lonely room,
In the land from whence I came;
Oh! stow me away in this ship, I pray,
For I hear her call my name."

"You must not go, and you shall not go,"
The first ghost cried in wrath.
"Your work is planned, in the astral land,
And a guide will show you the path."

"But the one I love"—"I loved her too,"
The first ghost stood and cried;
"And year on year I waited here,
Yea, waited till you died.

"For I would not come between you two,
Nor shadow her joy with fear,
But mine is the right, I claim this night
To visit the earthly sphere.

"For you are dead, and I am dead,
And you had her long—so long.
And the look on the grace of her worshipped face,
Ah! now it can do no wrong.

"I am fettered to Earth by love of her,
And hers is the spell divine,
That can help me rise, to the realm that lies
Just over the astral line.

"I have kept to the laws of God and man,
I have suffered and made no moan;
Now my little share of joy, I swear
I will have—and have it alone."

A skeleton crew the anchor drew,
And the ship from the port swung free;
With a muffled clang the ghost bell rang,
And the boat sailed out to sea.

And one ghost stood on the deck and laughed,
As only a glad ghost can;
While a swooning soul was dragged to his goal,
To work out the astral span.

And a woman wept, and prayed ere she slept,
For a dream to ease her pain;
But she dreamed instead of a man long dead,
Who had loved her all in vain.

WOMAN

STRANGE are the ways that her feet have trod
 Since first she was set in the path of duty,
Finished and fair by the hand of God,
 To carry her message of love and beauty.
Delicate creature of light and shade,
 She gleamed like an opal, on wide worlds under:
And earth looked up to her half afraid,
 While heaven looked down at her, full of wonder.

Flame of the comet and mist of the moon,
 And rays of the sun all mingled in her.
And the heart of her asked but a single boon—
 That love should seek her, and find her, and win her
She grasped the scope of the First Intent
 That made her kingdom *for her*, no other,
And joyfully into her place she went—
 The primal mate, and the primal mother.

Large was that kingdom and vast her sphere,
 And lightly she lifted and bore each burden.
Lightly she laughed in the eyes of fear,
 For love was her recompense, love her guerdon.
And never in camp, or in cave, or in home,
 Rose voice of mother or mate complaining.
And never the foot of her sought to roam,
 Till love in the heart of the man seemed waning.

In the broad rich furrows by woman turned
Man, unwitting, set plough and harrow.
For worlds to conquer she had not yearned,
Till he spoke of her feminine sphere as "narrow."
The lullaby changed to a martial strain—
When he took her travail, and song for granted—
And forth she forged in his own domain—
Till the strange "new woman" the old supplanted.

"Strange" with the glow of a wakened soul,
And "new" with the purpose of large endeavour,
She turned her face to the higher goal—
To the higher goal it is turned for ever.
Trade and science and craft and art,
Have opened their doors to the call of woman;
And greater she grows in her greater part,
More tenderly wise, and more sweetly human.

Brave foremothers of freedom's birth
Smile through space on your splendid daughters.
At one with liberty lighting the earth,
Their torches flame o'er the darkest waters.
They lend a lustre to sea and land:
They sweeten the world with their wholesome graces:
As out in the harbour of life they stand
To cheer and welcome the coming races.

Brave forefathers and heroes who fought
  Under the flag of the Revolution,
War was the price of the freedom you bought,
  But *peace* is the watchword of Evolution.
The progress of woman means progress of peace,
  She wars on war, and its hosts alarming ;
And her great love battle will never cease,
  Till the glory is seen of a world disarming.

The woman wonder with heart of flame,
  The coming man of the race will find her.
For petty purpose and narrow aim,
  And fault and flaw she will leave behind her.
He grown tender, and she grown wise,
  They shall enter the Eden by both created ;
The broadened kingdom of Paradise,
  And love, and mate, as the first pair mated.

BATTLE HYMN OF THE WOMEN

THEY are waking, they are waking,
  In the east, and in the west ;
They are throwing wide their windows to the sun ;
And they see the dawn is breaking,
  And they quiver with unrest,
For they know their work is waiting to be done.

They are waking in the city,
They are waking on the farm;
They are waking in the boudoir, and the mill;
And their hearts are full of pity
As they sound the loud alarm,
For the sleepers, who in darkness, slumber, still.

In the guarded harem prison,
Where they smother under veils,
And all echoes of the world are walled away;
Though the sun has not yet risen,
Yet the ancient darkness pales,
And the sleepers, in their slumber, dream of day.

And their dream shall grow in splendour
Till each sleeper wakes, and stirs;
Till she breaks from old traditions, and is free;
And the world shall rise, and render
Unto woman what is hers,
As it welcomes in the race that is to be.

Unto woman, God the Maker
Gave the secret of His plan;
It is written out in cipher, on her soul;
From the darkness, you must take her,
To the light of day, O man!
Would you know the mighty meaning of the scroll.

MEMORIES*

I AM thinking of the Springtime
On the farm out in the West,
When my world held nothing for me that I wanted,
(Save a courage all undaunted),
And my foolish little rhymes,
Were but heart beats, rung in chimes,
That I sounded, just to ease my life's unrest.
Yes, I sang them, and I rang them,
Just to ease my youth's unrest.

When I heard the name of London,
In that early day, afar,
In that Springtime of my Country over yonder,
Then I used to sit and wonder
If the day would come to me,
When my ship should cross the sea,
To the land that seemed as distant as a star
In my dreaming, ever gleaming
Like a distant unknown star.

Now in London in the Springtime,
I am sitting here, your guest.

* Written to be read at Luncheon, given by my Publishers to the London and Provincial Booksellers, April 12, 1910.

Nay—I think it is a vision, or a fancy—
Part of dreamland Necromancy;
And I question: is it true
That the great warm hearts of you,
Heard the winging of that singing in the West,
Heard the chiming of my rhyming
From the farmhouse in the West?

Let me linger in the fancy,
For the soul of me is stirred
As I dream that I am sitting here among you;
And the songs that I have sung you
Shall grow stronger through the art
Of heart speaking unto heart,
Through the gladness of the singer who is heard—
Lo! my songs have crossed the ocean,
But the voice of my emotion finds no word.

SEE?

IF one proves weak who you fancied strong,
Or false who you fancied true,
Just ease the smart of your wounded heart
By the thought that it is not you!

If many forget a promise made,
And your faith falls into the dust,
Then look meanwhile in your mirror and smile,
And say, "*I* am one to trust!"

If you search in vain for an ageing face
Unharrowed by fretful fears,
Then make right now (and keep) a vow
To grow in grace with the years.

If you lose your faith in the word of man
As you go from the port of youth,
Just say as you sail, "*I* will not fail
To keep to the course of truth!"

For this is the way, and the only way—
At least so it seems to me.
It is up to you, to be, and do,
What you look for in others. See?

THE PURPOSE

OVER and over the task was set,
Over and over I slighted the work,
But ever and alway I knew that yet
I must face and finish the toil I shirk.

Over and over the whip of pain
Has spurred and punished with blow on blow;
As ever and alway I tried in vain
To shun the labour I hated so.

Over and over I came this way
For just one purpose : O stubborn soul
Turn with a will to your work to-day,
And learn the lesson of *Self-Control.*

THE WHITE MAN

WHEREVER the white man's feet have trod
(Oh far does the white man stray)
A bold road rifles the virginal sod,
And the forest wakes out of its dream of God,
To yield him the right of way.
For this is the law : *By the power of thought,*
For worse, or for better, are miracles wrought

Wherever the white man's pathway leads
(Far, far has that pathway gone)
The Earth is littered with broken creeds—
And alway the dark man's tent recedes,
And the white man pushes on.
For this is the law : *Be it good or ill,*
All things must yield to the stronger will.

Wherever the white man's light is shed,
(Oh far has that light been thrown)
Though Nature has suffered and beauty bled,
Yet the goal of the race has been thrust ahead,
And the might of the race has grown.

For this is the law : *Be it cruel or kind*
The Universe sways to the power of mind.

A MOORISH MAID

ABOVE her veil a shrouded Moorish maid
Showed melting eyes, as limpid as a lake ;
A brow untouched by care ; a band of jetty hair,
And nothing more. The all-concealing haik
Fell to her high arched instep. At her side
An old duenna walked ; her withered face
Half covered only, since no lingering grace
Bespoke the beauty once her master's pride.

Above her veil, the Moorish maid beheld
The modern world, in Paris decked Algiers ;
Saw happy lad and lass, in love's contentment pass,
Or in sweet wholesome friendship, free from fears.
She saw fair matrons, walking arm-in-arm
With life-long lovers, time-endeared, and then
She saw the ardent look in eyes of men,
And thrilled and trembled with a vague alarm.

Above her veil she saw the stuccoed court
That led to dim secluded rooms within.
She followed, dutiful, the dame unbeautiful,
Who told her that the Christian world means sin.

Some day, full soon, she would go forth a bride—
Of one whose face she never had beheld.
Something within her, wakened, and rebelled;
She flung aside her veil, and cried, and cried.

LINCOLN

WHEN God created this good world
A few stupendous peaks were hurled
From His strong hand, and they remain
The wonder of the level plain.
But these colossal heights are rare,
While shifting sands are everywhere.

So with the race. The centuries pass
And nations fall like leaves of grass.
They die, forgotten and unsung;
While straight from God some souls are flung,
To live immortal and sublime.
So lives great Lincoln for all time.

I KNOW NOT

DEATH! I know not what room you are abiding in,
But I will go my way,
Rejoicing day by day,
Nor will I flee or stay
For fear I tread the path you may be hiding in.

Death! I know not, if my small barque be nearing you;
But if you are at sea,
Still there my sails float free;
"What is to be will be."
Nor will I mar the happy voyage by fearing you.

Death! I know not, what hour or spot you wait for me;
My days untroubled flow,
Just trusting on, I go,
For oh, I know, I know,
Death is but Life that holds some glad new fate for me.

INTERLUDE

THE days grow shorter, the nights grow longer;
The headstones thicken along the way,
And life grows sadder, but love grows stronger,
For those who walk with us day by day.

The tear comes quicker, the laugh comes slower;
The courage is lesser to do and dare;
And the tide of joy in the heart falls lower,
And seldom covers the reefs of care.

But all true things in the world seem truer;
And the better things of earth seem best,
And friends are dearer, as friends are fewer,
And love is *all* as our sun dips west.

Then let us clasp hands as we walk together,
And let us speak softly in love's sweet tone ;
For no man knows on the morrow whether
We two pass on—or but one alone.

RESURRECTION

PAUSING a moment ere the day was done,
While yet the earth was scintillant with light,
I backward glanced. From valley, plain, and height,
At intervals, where my life-path had run,
Rose cross on cross ; and nailed upon each one
Was my dead self. And yet that gruesome sight
Lent sudden splendour to the falling night,
Showing the conquests that my soul had won.

Up to the rising stars I looked and cried,
" There is no death ! for year on year, re-born
I wake to larger life : to joy more great,
So many times have I been crucified,
So often seen the resurrection morn,
I go triumphant, though new Calvaries wait."

THE VOICES OF THE CITY

THE voices of the city—merged and swelled
Into a mighty dissonance of sound,
And from the medley rose these broken strains
In changing time and ever-changing keys.

Pleasure seekers, silken clad,
Led by cherub Day,
Ours the duty to be glad,
Ours the toil of play.

Sleep has bound the commonplace;
Pleasure rules the dawn.
Small hours set the merry pace
And we follow on.

We must use the joys of earth,
All its cares we'll keep;
Night was made for youth and mirth,
Day was made for sleep.

Time has cut his beard, and lo!
He is but a boy,
Singing, on with him we go,
Ah! but life is joy.

We are the vendors of beauty,
We the purveyors for hell;
The carnal bliss of a purchased kiss
And the pleasures that blight, we sell.
God pity us; God pity the world.

We are the sad race-victims
Of the misused force in man,
Of the great white flame burned black with shame
And lost to the primal plan.
God pity us; God pity the world.

We are the Purpose of Being
Gone wrong in the thought of the world.
The torch for its hand made a danger brand
And into the darkness hurled.
God pity us; God pity the world.

III

We are the toilers in the realm of night
(Long, long the hours of night),
We are the human lever, wheel, and bolt,
That keeps the civic vehicle from jolt,
And jar upon the shining track of day
(The unremembered day).

We sleep away the sunlit hours of life
(Unsatisfied, sad life),
We wake in shadow and we rise in gloom.
False as a wanton's artificial bloom
Is that made light we labour in till dawn
(The lonely, laggard dawn).

Like visions half remembered in a dream
(A strange and broken dream)
Our children's faces, seen but while they sleep,
Within our hearts these weary hours we keep.
We are the toilers in the realm of night
(Long, long the hours of night).

CHORUS

We are hope and faith and sorrow,
We are peace and pain and passion,
We are ardent lovers kissing,
We are happy mothers crooning,
We are rosy children dreaming,
We are honest labour sleeping,
We are wholesome pleasure laughing,
We are wakeful riches feasting,
We are lifted spirits praying,
We the voices of the city.

Out of the medley rose these broken strains,
In changing time and ever-changing keys.

IF CHRIST CAME QUESTIONING

IF Christ came questioning His world to-day,
(If Christ came questioning,)
"What hast thou done to glorify thy God,
Since last My feet this lower earth plane trod?"
How could I answer Him; and in what way
One evidence of my allegiance bring;
If Christ came questioning?

If Christ came questioning, to me alone,
(If Christ came questioning,)
I could not point to any church or shrine,
And say, "I helped build up this house of Thine;
Behold the altar, and the corner stone";
I could not show one proof of such a thing;
If Christ came questioning.

If Christ came questioning, on His demand,
(If Christ came questioning,)
No pagan soul converted to His creed
Could I proclaim; or say, that word or deed
Of mine, had spread the faith in any land;
Or sent it forth, to fly on stronger wing;
If Christ came questioning.

If Christ came questioning the soul of me,
(If Christ came questioning,)
I could but answer, "Lord, my little part

Has been to beat the metal of my heart,
Into the shape I thought most fit for Thee;
And at Thy feet, to cast the offering;
Shouldst Thou come questioning.

"From out the earth-fed furnaces of desire,
(Ere Thou cam'st questioning,)
This formless and unfinished gift I brought,
And on life's anvil flung it down, white hot:
A glowing thing, of selfishness and fire,
With blow on blow, I made the anvil ring;
(Ere Thou cam'st questioning).

"The hammer, Self-Control, beat hard on it;
(Ere Thou cam'st questioning,)
And with each blow, rose fiery sparks of pain;
I bear their scars, on body, soul, and brain.
Long, long I toiled; and yet, dear Lord, unfit,
And all unworthy, is the heart I bring,
To meet Thy questioning."

ENGLAND, AWAKE!

A BEAUTIFUL great lady, past her prime,
Behold her dreaming in her easy chair;
Grey robed, and veiled, in laces old and rare.
Her smiling eyes see but the vanished time,

Of splendid prowess, and of deeds sublime.
  Self satisfied she sits, all unaware
  That peace has flown before encroaching care,
And through her halls stalks hunger, linked with crime.

England, awake! from dreams of what has been,
  Look on what *is*, and put the past away.
Speak to your sons, until they understand.
England, awake! for dreaming now is sin;
  In all your ancient wisdom, rise to-day,
And save the glory of your menaced land.

BE NOT ATTACHED

"BE not attached." So runs the great command
  For those who seek to "know" and "understand."
Who sounds the waters of the deeper sea
Must first draw up his anchor and go free.

But not for me, that knowledge. I must wait
Until again I enter through life's gate.
I am not brave enough to sail away
To farther seas, and leave this beauteous bay.

Love barnacled, my anchor lies; and oh!
I would not lift it if I could, and go
All unattached, to find those truths which lie
Far out at sea, beneath a lonely sky.

Though peace of heart, and happiness of soul,
Await the seeker at that farther goal,
With love and all its rapture and its pain,
Close to the shores of earth I must remain.

Nor yet would I relinquish my sweet dream
To gain possession of the Fact supreme.
I am attached, and well content to stay,
Learning such truths as love may send my way.

AN EPISODE

ALONG the narrow Moorish street
A blue-eyed soldier strode.
(Ah, well-a-day)
Veiled from her lashes to her feet
She stepped from her abode,
(Ah, lack-a-day).

Now love may guard a favoured wife
Who leaves the harem door ;
(Ah, well-a-day)
But hungry hearted is her life
When she is one of four.
(Ah, lack-a-day.)

If black eyes glow with sudden fire
And meet warm eyes of blue—
(Ah, well-a-day).
The old, old story of desire
Repeats itself anew.
(Ah, lack-a-day.)

When bugles blow the soldier flies—
Though bitter tears may fall
(Ah, lack-a-day).
A Moorish child with blue, blue eyes
Plays in the harem hall.
(Ah, well-a-day.)

THE VOICE OF THE VOICELESS

I AM the voice of the voiceless;
Through me the dumb shall speak;
Till the deaf world's ear be made to hear
The cry of the wordless weak.
From street, from cage, and from kennel,
From jungle and stall, the wail
Of my tortured kin proclaims the sin
Of the mighty against the frail.

I am a ray from the centre;
And I will feed God's spark,
Till a great light glows in the night and shows
The dark deeds done in the dark.

And full on the thoughtless sleeper
  Shall flash its glaring flame,
Till he wakens to see what crimes may be
  Cloaked under an honoured name.

The same Force formed the sparrow
  That fashioned man, the king;
The God of the Whole gave a spark of soul
  To furred and to feathered thing.
And I am my brother's keeper,
  And I will fight his fight,
And speak the word for beast and bird,
  Till the world shall set things right.

Let no voice cavil at Science—
  The strong torch-bearer of God;
For brave are his deeds, though dying creeds,
  Must fall where his feet have trod.
But he who would trample kindness
  And mercy into the dust—
He has missed the trail, and his quest will fail:
  He is not the guide to trust.

For love is the true religion,
  And love is the law sublime;
And all that is wrought, where love is not,
  Will die at the touch of time.

And Science, the great revealer,
Must flame his torch at the Source ;
And keep it bright with that holy light,
Or his feet shall fail on the course.

Oh, never a brute in the forest,
And never a snake in the fen,
Or ravening bird, starvation stirred,
Has hunted its prey like men.
For hunger, and fear, and passion
Alone drive beasts to slay,
But wonderful man, the crown of the plan,
Tortures, and kills, for play.

He goes well fed from his table ;
He kisses his child and wife ;
Then he haunts a wood, till he orphans a brood,
Or robs a deer of its life.
He aims at a speck in the azure,
Winged dove, that has flown at a call ;
It reels down to die, and he lets it lie ;
His pleasure was seeing it fall.

And one there was, weary of laurels,
Of burdens and troubles of State ;
So the jungle he sought, with the beautiful thought
Of shooting a she lion's mate.

And one came down from the pulpit,
In the pride of a duty done,
And his cloth sufficed, as his emblem of Christ,
While murder smoked out of his gun.

One strays from the haunts of fashion
With an indolent, unused brain;
But his sluggish heart feels a sudden start
In the purpose of giving pain.
And the fluttering flock of pigeons,
As they rise on eager wings,
From prison to death, bring a catch in his breath!
Oh, the rapture of killing things!

Now, this is the race as we find it,
Where love, in the creed, spells hate;
And where bird and beast meet a foe in the priest
And in rulers of fashion and State.
But up to the Kingdom of Thinkers
Has risen the cry of our kin;
And the weapons of thought are burnished and brought
To clash with the bludgeons of sin.

Far Christ, of a million churches,
Come near to the earth again;
Be more than a name; be a living Flame;
"Make Good" in the hearts of men.

Shine full on the path of Science,
  And show it the heights above,
Where vast truths lie for the searching eye
  That shall follow the torch of love.

TIME'S DEFEAT

TIME has made conquest of so many things
That once were mine. Swift-footed, eager youth
That ran to meet the years; bold brigand health,
That broke all laws of reason unafraid,
And laughed at talk of punishment.

Close ties of blood and friendship, joy of life,
Which reads its music in the major key
And will not listen to a minor strain—
These things and many more are spoils of time.

Yet as a conqueror who only storms
The outpost of a town, and finds the fort
Too strong to be assailed, so time retreats
And knows his impotence. He cannot take
My three great jewels from the crown of life:
Love, sympathy, and faith; and year on year
He sees them grow in lustre and in worth,
And glowers by me, plucking at his beard,
And dragging, as he goes, a useless scythe.

Once in the dark he plotted with his friend
Grim Death, to steal my treasures. Death replied:
"They are immortal, and beyond thy reach,
I could but set them in another sphere,
To shine with greater lustre."

Time and Death
Passed on together, knowing their defeat;
And I am singing by the road of life.

THE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC

I HAVE listened to the sighing of the burdened and the bound,
I have heard it change to crying, with a menace in the sound;
I have seen the money-getters pass unheeding on the way,
As they went to forge new fetters for the people day by day.

Then the voice of Labour thundered forth its purpose and its need,
And I marvelled, and I wondered, at the cold dull ear of greed;

For as chimes, in some great steeple, tell the passing of the hour,
So the voices of the people tell the death of purchased power.

All the gathered dust of ages, God is brushing from His book;
He is opening up its pages, and He bids His children look;
And in shock and conflagration, and in pestilence and strife,
He is speaking to the nations, of the brevity of life.

Mother Earth herself is shaken by our sorrows and our crimes;
And she bids her sons awaken to the portent of the times;
With her travail pains upon her, she is hurling from their place
All the minions of dishonour, to admit the Coming Race.

By the voice of Justice bidden, she has torn the mask from might;
All the shameful secrets hidden, she is dragging into light;

And whoever wrongs his neighbour must be brought to
judgment *now*,
Though he wear the badge of Labour, or a crown upon
his brow.

There is growth in Revolution, if the word is understood;
It is one with Evolution, up from self, to brotherhood;
He who utters it unheeding, bent on self, or selfish
gain,
His own day of doom is speeding, though he toil, or
though he reign.

God is calling to the masses, to the peasant, and the
peer;
He is calling to all classes, that the crucial hour is
near;
For each rotting throne must tremble, and fall broken
in the dust,
With the leaders who dissemble, and betray a people's
trust.

Still the voice of God is calling; and above the wreck
I see,
And beyond the gloom appalling, the great Government-to-Be.

From the ruins it has risen, and my soul is overjoyed,
For the school supplants the prison, and there are no
"unemployed."

And there are no children's faces at the spindle or the
loom;
They are out in sunny places, where the other sweet
things bloom;
God has purified the alleys, He has set the white slaves
free,
And they own the hills and valleys in this Government-
to-Be.

THE RADIANT CHRIST

ARISE, O master artist of the age,
And paint the picture which at once shall be
Immortal art and bless'd prophecy,
The bruisèd vision of the world assuage;
To earth's dark book add one illumined page,
So scintillant with truth, that all who see
Shall break from superstition and stand free.
Now let this wondrous work thy hand engage.
The mortal sorrow of the Nazarene,
Too long has been faith's symbol and its sign;
Too long a dying Saviour has sufficed.
Give us the glowing emblem which shall mean

Mankind awakened to the Self Divine;
The living emblem of the Radiant Christ.

Too long the crucifix on Calvary's height
Has cast its shadow on the human heart.
Let now Religion's great co-worker Art,
Limn on the background of departing night,
The shining Face, all palpitant with light,
And God's true message to the world impart.
Go tell each toiler in the home and mart,
"Lo, Christ is with ye, if ye seek aright."
The world forgets the vital word Christ taught;
The only word the world has need to know:
The answer to creation's problem—Love.
The world remembers what the Christ forgot;
His cross of anguish and His death of woe;
Release the martyr, and the Cross remove!

III

For now "the former things have passed away,"
And man, forgetting that which lies behind,
And ever pressing forward, seeks to find
The prize of his high calling. Send a ray
From art's bright sun to fortify the day,
And blaze the trail to every mortal mind
The new religion lies in being kind;

Faith stands and works, where once it knelt to pray;
Faith counts its gain, where once it reckoned loss;
Ascending paths its patient feet have trod;
Man looks within, and finds salvation there.
Release the suffering Saviour from the Cross,
And give the waiting world its Radiant God.

AT BAY

WIFE

REACH out your arms, and hold me close and fast.
Tell me there are no memories of your past
That mar this love of ours, so great, so vast.

HUSBAND

Some truths are cheapened when too oft averred.
Does not the deed speak louder than the word?
(Dear God, that old dream woke again and stirred.)

WIFE

As you love me, you never loved before?
Though oft you say it, say it yet once more.
My heart is jealous of those days of yore.

HUSBAND

Sweet wife, dear comrade, mother of my child,
My life is yours by memory undefiled.
(It stirs again, that passion brief and wild.)

WIFE

You never knew a happier hour than this?
We two alone, our hearts surcharged with bliss,
Nor other kisses, sweet as my own kiss?

HUSBAND

I was a thirsty field, long parched with drouth,
You were the warm rain, blowing from the south.
(But, ah, the crimson madness of *her* mouth!)

You would not, if you could, go down life's track
For just one little moment and bring back
Some vanished rapture that you miss or lack?

HUSBAND

I am content. You are my life, my all.
(One burning hour, but one, could I recall;
God, how men lie when driven to the wall!)

THE BIRTH OF JEALOUSY

WITH brooding mien and sultry eyes,
Outside the gates of Paradise
Eve sat, and fed the faggot flame
That lit the path whence Adam came.
(Strange are the workings of a woman's mind.)

His giant shade preceded him,
Along the pathway green, and dim;
She heard his swift approaching tread,
But still she sat with drooping head.
(Dark are the jungles of unhappy thoughts.)

He kissed her mouth, and gazed within
Her troubled eyes; for since their sin,
His love had grown a thousandfold.
But Eve drew back; her face was cold.
(Oh, who can read the cipher of a soul.)

"Now art thou mourning still, sweet wife?"
Spake Adam tenderly, "the life
Of our lost Eden? Why, in *thee*
All Paradise remains for me."
(Deep, deep the currents in a strong man's heart.)

Thus Eve: "Nay, not lost Eden's bliss
I mourn; for heavier woe than this
Wears on me, with one thought accursed.
In Adam's life I am not first.
(O woman's mind! what hells are fashioned there.)

"The serpent whispered Lilith's name:
('Twas thus he drove me to my shame)
Pluck yonder fruit, he said, and know,
How Adam loved *her*, long ago.
(Fools, fools, who wander searching after pain.)

"I ate; and like an ancient scroll,
I saw that other life unroll;
I saw thee, Adam, far from here
With Lilith on a wondrous sphere.
(Bold, bold, the daring of a jealous heart.)

"Nay, tell me not I dreamed it all;
Last night in sleep thou didst let fall
Her name in tenderness; I bowed
My stricken head and cried aloud.
(Vast, vast the torment of a self-made woe.)

"And it was then, and not before,
That Eden shut and barred its door.
Alone in God's great world I seemed,
Whilst thou of thy lost Lilith dreamed.
(Oh, who can measure such wide loneliness.)

"Now every little breeze that sings,
Sighs Lilith, like thy whisperings.
Oh, where can sorrow hide its face,
When Lilith, Lilith, fills all space?"
(And Adam in the darkness spake no word.)

SUMMER'S FAREWELL

ALL in the time when Earth did most deplore
The cold ungracious aspect of young May,
Sweet Summer came, and bade him smile once more;
She wove bright garlands, and in winsome play
She bound him willing captive. Day by day
She found new wiles wherewith his heart to please;
Or bright the sun, or if the skies were grey,
They laughed together, under spreading trees,
By running brooks, or on the sandy shores of seas.

They were but comrades. To that radiant maid
No serious word he spake; no lovers' plea.
Like careless children, glad and unafraid,
They sported in their opulence of glee.
Her shining tresses floated wild and free;
In simple lines her emerald garments hung;
She was both good to hear, and fair to see;
And when she laughed, then Earth laughed too, and flung
His cares behind him, and grew radiant and young.

On a golden day, as he reclined beneath
The arching azure of enchanting skies,
Fair Summer came, engirdled with a wreath
Of gorgeous leaves all scintillant with dyes.
Effulgent was she; yet within her eyes,

There hung a quivering mist of tears unshed.
Her crimson-mantled bosom shook with sighs;
Above him bent the glory of her head;
And on his mouth she pressed a splendid kiss, and fled.

THE GOAL

ALL roads that lead to God are good;
What matters it, your faith, or mine?
Both centre at the goal divine
Of love's eternal Brotherhood.

The kindly life in house or street;
The life of prayer and mystic rite;
The student's search for truth and light—
These paths at one great junction meet.

Before the oldest book was writ,
Full many a prehistoric soul
Arrived at this unchanging goal,
Through changeless Love, that led to it.

What matters that one found his Christ
In rising sun, or burning fire?
If faith within him did not tire,
His longing for the truth sufficed.

Before our "Christian" hell was brought
To edify a modern world,
Full many a hate filled soul was hurled
In lakes of fire by its own thought.

A thousand creeds have come and gone;
But what is that to you or me?
Creeds are but branches of a tree—
The root of love lives on and on.

Though branch by branch proves withered wood
The root is warm with precious wine;
Then keep your faith, and leave me mine;
All roads that lead to God are good.

CHRIST CRUCIFIED

NOW ere I slept, my prayer had been
that I might see my way
To do the will of Christ, our Lord
and Master, day by day;
And with this prayer upon my lips,
I knew not that I dreamed,
But suddenly the world of night
a pandemonium seemed.
From forest, and from slaughter house,
from bull ring, and from stall,

There rose an anguished cry of pain,
a loud, appealing call ;
As man—the dumb beast's next of kin—
with gun, and whip, and knife,
Went pleasure-seeking through the earth,
blood-bent on taking life.
From trap, and cage, and house, and zoo,
and street, that awful strain
Of tortured creatures rose and swelled
the orchestra of pain.
And then methought the gentle Christ
appeared to me, and spoke :
"I called you, but ye answered not"—
and in my fear I woke.

Then next I heard the roar of mills ;
and moving through the noise,
Like phantoms in an underworld,
were little girls and boys.
Their backs were bent, their brows were pale,
their eyes were sad and old ;
But by the labour of their hands
greed added gold to gold.
Again the Presence and the Voice :
"Behold the crimes I see,
As ye have done it unto these,
so have ye done to me."

Again I slept. I seemed to climb
a hard, ascending track;
And just behind me laboured one
whose patient face was black.
I pitied him; but hour by hour
he gained upon the path;
He stood beside me, stood upright—
and then I turned in wrath.
"Go back!" I cried. "What right have you
to walk beside me here?
For you are black, and I am white."
I paused, struck dumb with fear.
For lo! the black man was not there,
but Christ stood in his place;
And oh! the pain, the pain, the pain
that looked from that dear face.

Now when I woke, the air was rife
with that sweet, rhythmic din
Which tells the world that Christ has come
to save mankind from sin
And through the open door of church
and temple passed a throng,
To worship Him with bended knee,
with sermon, and with song.
But over all I heard the cry
of hunted, mangled things;

Those creatures which are part of God,
though they have hoofs and wings.
I saw in mill, and mine, and shop,
the little slaves of greed;
I heard the strife of race with race,
all sprung from one God-seed.
And then I bowed my head in shame,
and in contrition cried—
"Lo, after nineteen hundred years,
Christ still is Crucified."

THE TRIP TO MARS

OH! by and by we shall hear the cry,
"This is the way to Mars.
Come take a trip, on the morning Ship;
It sails by the Isle of Stars.

"A glorious view of planets new
We promise by night and day.
Past dying suns our good ship runs,
And we pause at the Milky Way."

I am almost sure we will take that tour
Together, my dear, my dear.
For, ever have we, by land and sea,
Gone journeying far and near.

Out over the deep—o'er mountain steep
We have travelled mile on mile;
And to sail away to the Martian Bay,
Oh! that were a trip worth while.

Our ship will race through seas of space,
Up into the Realms of Light,
Till the whirling ball of the earth grows small,
And is utterly lost to sight.

Through the nebulous spawn where planets are born,
We shall pass with sails well furled,
And with eager eyes we will scan the skies,
For the sights of a new-made world.

From the derelict barque of a sun gone dark,
Adrift on our fair ship's path,
A beacon star shall guide us afar,
And far from the comet's wrath.

Oh! many a start of pulse and heart
We have felt at the sights of land.
But what would we do if the dream came true,
And we sighted the Martian strand?

So, if some day you come and say,
They are sailing to Mars, I hear.
I want you to know I am ready to go—
All ready, my dear, my dear.

FICTION AND FACT

IN books I read, how men have lived and died,
With hopeless love deep in their bosoms hidden.
While she for whom they long in secret sighed,
Went on her way, nor guessed this flame unbidden.

In real life, I never chanced to see
The woman who was loved, and did not know it
And observation proves this fact to me :
No man can love a woman and not show it.

PROGRESS

THERE is no progress in the world of bees,
However wise and wonderful they are,
Their wisdom makes not increase. Lies the bar,
To wider goals, in that tense strife to please
A Sovereign Ruler ? Forth from flowers to trees
Their little quest is ; not from star to star.
This is not growth ; the mighty Avatar
Comes not to do his work with such as these.

So in the world of men ; when legions toil
To feed a Monarch, and begem a crown,
They build before high heaven a narrowing wall
And the great purpose of Creation spoil.
Not on, and upward, is the trend, but down ;
The Race can rise but with the rise of all.

HOW THE WHITE ROSE CAME

THE roses all were pink and red,
Before the Bumble Bee,
A lover bold, with cloak of gold,
Came singing merrily
Along the sunlit ways that led
From woodland, and from lea.

He paused beside an opening rose,
The garden's pet and pride;
She burst in flower that very hour,
While wooing zephyrs sighed;
No smile had she for one of those,
And hope within them died.

The ardent butterfly in vain
On radiant wings drew near;
The hapless moth in vain grew wroth—
The fair rose leaned to hear
The deep-voiced stranger's low refrain
That thrilled upon her ear.

She gave her heart in love's delight
And let the whole world see;
Alas! one day, away, away,
Sped truant Bumble Bee;
'Twas then the red rose turned to white-
So was the tale told me.

I LOOK TO SCIENCE

I LOOK to Science for the cure of Crime;
To patient righting of a thousand wrongs:
To final healing of a thousand ills.
Blind runner now, and cruel egotist
It yet leads on to more than mortal sight,
And the large knowledge that means humbleness,
And tender love for all created things.

I look to Science for the Coming Race
Growing from seed selected; and from soil
Love fertilised; and pruned by wisdom's hand,
Till out of mortal man spring demi-gods,
Strong primal creatures with awakened souls
And normal passions, governed by the will,
Leaving a trail of glory where they tread.

I look to Science for the growth of Faith.
That bold denier of accepted creeds—
That mighty doubter of accepted truths—
Shall yet reveal God's secrets to the world,
And prove the facts it seeks to overthrow.
And a new name shall Science henceforth bear—
The Great Religion of the Universe.

APPRECIATION

THEY prize not most the opulence of June
Who from the year's beginning to its close
Dwell, where unfading verdure tireless grows,
And where sweet summer's harp is kept in tune.
We must have listened to the winter's rune,
And felt impatient longings for the rose,
Ere its full radiance on our vision glows,
Or with its fragrant soul we can commune.

Not they most prize life's blessings, and delights,
Who walk in safe and sunny paths alway.
But those who, groping in the darkness, borrow
Pale rays from hope, to lead them through the night,
And in the long, long watches wait for day.
He knows not joy who has not first known sorrow.

THE AWAKENING

I LOVE the tropics, where sun and rain
Go forth together, a joyous train,
To hold up the green, gay side of the world,
And to keep earth's banners of bloom unfurled

I love the scents that are hidden there
By housekeeper Time, in her chests of air:
Strange and subtle and all a-rife,
With vague lost dreams of a bygone life.

They steal upon you by night and day,
But never a whiff can you take away :
And never a song of a tropic bird
Outside of its palm-decked land is heard.

And nowhere else can you know the sweet
Soft, "joy-in-nothing," that comes with the heat
Of tropic regions. And yet, and yet,
If in evergreen worlds my way were set

I would span the waters of widest seas
To see the wonder of waking trees ;
To feel the shock of sudden delight
That comes when the orchard has changed in a
night,
From the winter nun to the bride of May,
And the harp of Spring is attuned to play
The wedding march, and the sun is priest,
And the world is bidden to join the feast.

Oh, never is felt in a tropic clime,
Where the singing of birds is a ceaseless chime,
That leap o' the blood, and the rapture thrill,
That comes to us here, with the first bird's trill ;
And only the eye that has looked on snows
Can see the beauty that lies in a rose.
The lure of the tropics I understand,
But ho ! for the Spring in my native land.

MOST BLEST IS HE

MOST blest is he who in the morning time
Sets forth upon his journey with no staff
Shaped by another for his use. Who sees
The imminent necessity for toil,
And with each morning wakens to the thought
Of tasks that wait his doing. Never yet
Has unearned leisure and the gift of gold
Bestowed such benefits upon the young
As need and loneliness; and when life adds
The burden of a duty, difficult,
And hard to carry, then rejoice, O soul!
And know thyself one chosen for high things.
Behind thee walk the Helpers. Yet lead on!
They only help the lifters, and they give
But unto those who also freely give.
Not till thy will, thy courage, and thy strength
Have done their utmost, and thy love has flowed
In pity and compassion, out to all
(The worthless, the ungrateful, and the weak,
As well as to the worthy and the strong)
Canst thou receive invisible support.
Do first thy part, and all of it, before
Asking the helpers to do aught for thee.
For this alone the Universe exists,
That man may find himself, his Destiny.

NIRVANA

A DROP of water risen from the ocean
Forgot its cause, and spake with deep emotion
Unto a passing breeze. "How desolate
And all forlorn is my unhappy fate.
I know not whence I came, or where I go.
Scorched by the sun, or chilled by winds that blow,
I dwell in space a little time, then pass
Out into the night and nothingness—alas!"

"Nay," quoth the breeze, "my friend, that cannot be.
Thou dost reflect the Universe to me.
Look at thine own true self, and there behold
A world of light, all scintillant with gold."
Just there the drop sank back into the wave
From whence it came. Nay, that was not its *grave!*

It lived, it moved, it was a joyous part
Of that strong palpitating ocean heart;
Its little dream of loneliness was done;
It woke to find, Self, and Cause, were one.
So shalt thou wake, sad mortal, when thy course
Has run its karmic round, and reached the Source,
And even now thou dost reflect the whole
Of God's great glory in thy shining soul.

LIFE

OH! I feel the growing glory
Of our life upon this sphere,
Of the life that like a river
Runs for ever and for ever,
From the somewhere to the here,
And still on and onward flowing,
Leads us out to larger knowing,
Through the hidden, to the clear.

And I feel a deep thanksgiving
For the sorrows I have known;
For the worries and the crosses,
And the grieving and the losses,
That along my path were sown.
Now the great eternal meaning
Of each trouble I am gleaning,
And the harvest is my own.

I am opulent with knowledge
Of the Purpose and the Cause,
And I go my way rejoicing,
And in singing seek the voicing
Of love's never-failing laws.
From the now, unto the Yonder,
Full of beauty and of wonder,
Life flows ever without pause.

And I feel the exultation
Of a child that loves its play,
Though the ranks of friends are thinning,
Still the end is but beginning
Of a larger, fuller day,
And the joy of life is spilling
From my spirit, as all willing
I go speeding on my way.

TWO MEN

SO much one thought about the life beyond
He did not drain the waters of his pond;
And when death laid his children 'neath the sod
He called it—"the mysterious will of God."
He would not strive for worldly gain, not he.
His wealth, he said, was stored in God's To Be.
He kept his mortal body poorly drest,
And talked about the garments of the blest.
And when to his last sleep he laid him down,
His only mourner begged her widow's gown.

One was not sure there was a life to come.
So made an Eden of his earthly home.
He strove for wealth and with an open hand
He comforted the needy in his land.
He wore new garments often, and the old
Helped many a brother to keep out the cold.

He said this life was such a little span
Man ought to make the most of it—for man.
And when he died the fortune that he left
Gave succour to the needy and bereft.

ONLY BE STILL

"ONLY be still, and in the silence grow,"
If thou art seeking what the gods bestow.
This is the simple, safe, and certain way
That leads to knowledge for which all men pray
Of higher laws to govern things below.

But in our restless discontent we go
With noisy importuning day on day—
Drowning the inner voice that strives to say
"Only be still, and in the silence grow."

We doubt, we cavil, and we talk of woe—
We delve in books, and waste our forces so;
We cling to creeds that were not meant to stay,
And close our ears to Truth's immortal lay.
Oh wouldst thou see, and understand, and know?
"Only be still, and in the silence grow."

PARDONED OUT

I'M pardoned out. Again the stars
  Shine on me with their myriad eyes.
So long I've peered 'twixt iron bars,
  I'm awed by this expanse of skies.
The world is wider than I thought,
  And yet 'tis not so wide, I know,
But into its remotest spot
  My tale of shame can go.

I'm pardoned out. Old Father Time
  Who seemed to halt in horror, when
I stained my manhood by a crime,
  With steady step moves on again,
And through the black appalling night,
  That walled me in a gloom accurst,
The wonder of the morning light
  In sudden glory burst.

I'm pardoned out. I shall be known
  No more by number, but by name.
And yet each whispering wind has blown
  Abroad the story of my shame.
I dread to see men shrink away
  With startled looks of scorn or fear,
When in life's crowded marts some day,
  That name falls on their ear.

I'm pardoned out, ah God! to roam
  Like some whipped dog among my kind.
I have no friends, I have no home,
  Save these bleak walls I leave behind.
How can I face the world of men,
  My comrades in the days of yore?
Oh! hide me in my cell again,
  And, warden, lock the door.

THE TIDES

OH, vain is the stern protesting
  Of winds, when the tide runs high;
And vainly the deep-sea waters
  Call out, as the waves speed by;
For, deaf to the claim of the ocean,
  To the threat of the loud winds dumb,
Past reef and bar, to shores afar,
  They rush when the hour is come.

Vainly the tempest thunders,
  Of unsexed waves that roam,
Away from the mid-sea calmness,
  Where Nature made their home.
For the voice of the great Moon-Mother,
  Has spoken and said, "Be free."
And the tide must go to the strong full flow,
  In the time of the perigee.

So vain is the cry of the masters,
  And vain the plea of the hearth
As the ranks of the strange New Woman
  Go sweeping across the earth.
They have come from hall and hovel,
  They have pushed through door and gate;
On the world's highway they are crowded to-day,
  For the hour is the hour of fate.

Many are hurt in the crowding,
  The light of the home burns dim;
And man is aghast at the changes,
  Though all can be traced to him.
They sat too long at the hearthstone,
  And sat too oft alone:
And the silence spoke, and their souls awoke,
  And now they must claim their own.

Let no man hope to hinder,
  Let no man bid them pause:
They are moved by a hidden purpose,
  They follow resistless laws.
And out of the wreck and chaos
  Of the order that used to be,
A strong new race shall take its place
  In a world we are yet to see.

Oh, ever has man been leader,
Yet failed as woman's guide.
It is better that she step forward,
And take her place at his side.
For only from greater woman,
May come the greater man,
Through life's long quest they should walk abreast—
As was meant by the primal plan.

PROGRESSION

TO each progressive soul there comes a day,
When all things that have pleased and satisfied
Grow flavourless, the springs of joy seem dried.
No more the waters of youth's fountains play;
Yet out of reach, tiptoeing as they may,
The more mature and higher pleasures hide.
Life, like a careless nurse, fails to provide
New toys for those the soul has cast away.

Upon a strange land's border all alone,
Awhile it stands dismayed and desolate.
Nude too, since its old garments are outgrown;
Till clothed with strength befitting its estate,
It grasps at length those raptures that are known
To souls who learn to labour, and to wait.

ACQUAINTANCE

NOT we who daily walk the city's street,
Not those who have been cradled in its heart,
Best understand its architectural art
Or realise its grandeur. Oft we meet
Some stranger who has staid his passing feet
And lingered with us for a single hour,
And learned more of cathedral, and of tower,
Than we who deem our knowledge quite complete.

Not always those we hold most loved and dear,
Not always those who dwell with us, know best
Our greater selves. Because they stand so near
They cannot see the lofty mountain crest,
The gleaming sun-kissed height, which fair and clear
Stands forth—revealed unto the some-time guest.

ATTAINMENT

THERE is no summit you may not attain,
No purpose which you may not yet achieve
If you will wait serenely and believe.
Each seeming loss is but a step to'rd gain.

Between the mountain-tops lie vale and plain;
Let nothing make you question, doubt, or grieve;
Give only good, and good alone receive;
And as you welcome joy, so welcome pain.

That which you most desire awaits your word ;
  Throw wide the door and bid it enter in.
Speak, and the strong vibrations shall be stirred ;
  Speak, and above earth's loud, unmeaning din
Your silent declarations shall be heard.
  All things are possible to God's own kin.

THE TOWER-ROOM

THERE is a room serene and fair,
All palpitant with light and air ;
Free from the dust, world's noise and fuss—
God's Tower-room in each of us.

Oh! many a stair our feet must press,
And climb from self to selflessness,
Before we reach that radiant room
Above the discord and the gloom.

So many, many stairs to climb,
But mount them gently—take your time ;
Rise leisurely, nor strive to run—
Not so the mightiest feats are done.

Well doing of the little things :
Repression of the word that stings ;
The tempest of the mind made still
By victory of the God-like will.

The hated task performed in love—
All these are stairs that wind above
The things that trouble and annoy,
Up to the Tower-room of joy.

Rise leisurely; the stairs once trod
Reveal the mountain peaks of God;
And from its upper room the soul
Sees all, in one united whole.

FATHER

HE never made a fortune, or a noise
In the world where men are seeking after fame;
But he had a healthy brood of girls and boys
Who loved the very ground on which he trod.
They thought him just a little short of God;
Oh, you should have heard the way they said his name—
"Father."

There seemed to be a loving little prayer
In their voices, even when they called him "Dad."
Though the man was never heard of anywhere
As a hero, yet you somehow understood
He was doing well his part and making good;
And you knew it, by the way his children had
Of saying "Father."

He gave them neither eminence nor wealth,
But he gave them blood untainted with a vice,
And the opulence of undiluted health.
He was honest, and unpurchable and kind;
He was clean in heart, and body, and in mind
So he made them heirs to riches without price —
This father.

He never preached or scolded; and the rod—
Well, he used it as a turning pole in play.
But he showed the tender sympathy of God
To his children in their troubles, and their joys.
He was always chum and comrade with his boys,
And his daughters—oh, you ought to hear them say
"Father."

Now I think of all achievements 'tis the least
To perpetuate the species; it is done
By the insect and the serpent, and the beast.
But the man who keeps his body, and his thought,
Worth bestowing on an offspring love-begot,
Then the highest earthly glory he has won,
When in pride a grown-up daughter or a son
Says "That's Father."

THE NEW HAWAIIAN GIRL

EXPLANATORY

KAMEHAMEHA FIRST, of the Hawaiian Islands, conquered his foes in a great battle, driving them over the high mountain peak known as Pali—one of the famous scenic views of the world, and the goal of all visitors in Honolulu.

The Hula (pronounced *hoola*) was the national muscle and abdominal dance of Hawaii, and the late King Kalakua was its enthusiastic patron. The costume of the dancers was composed chiefly of skirts of grass. The Hula (so attired) is now forbidden by law. The Hula Kui is a modification of the dance and exceedingly graceful.

Many charming young self-supporting women in Honolulu trace their ancestry back to Kamehameha with great pride. The chant is a weird sing-song which relates the conquests of the race.

It is the custom in Honolulu to present guests at feasts and festivals, or departing visitors, with long wreaths of natural flowers, and which are worn by men as well as women, about the head, hat, and neck. These wreaths called lais (pronounced *lays*), sometimes reach below the waist.

The flower-sellers are one of the national features of Honolulu.

Scene made to represent grounds at Hawaiian Hotel. Sort of open café or pavilion with palms, vines, and tropic flowers. RALPH *sitting alone with a dreamy air.*

Enter ETHEL—*in short travelling suit—typical American girl—blonde and petite.*

ETHEL

OH, here you are. Your sister and your mother
Commissioned me detective, sleuth, and spy,
To find the disappearing son and brother;
And tell him that the time is slipping by.
Our boat will sail in just two hours, you know.
Dear Honolulu, how I hate to go.

RALPH

Don't mention it; I shun the very thought.

ETHEL

You see this is the sort of thing one hears
And don't believe, until one sees the spot.
We left New York in snow up to its ears;
And now a Paradise! the palm, the rose,
The Boaganvillia, and the breath of summer.

RALPH

I tell you Honolulu is a hummer.
It pays for six long days upon the ocean—
And those sad memories of a ship's queer motion.

ETHEL

There's one thing, though, that's disappointed me—
The much exploïted Honolulu maid.
I haven't seen a beauty in the town.

RALPH

They're thick as ripe bananas on a tree.
You have not been observing, I'm afraid.

ETHEL (*shrugging her shoulders*)

Oh well, tastes differ ; I don't care for brown,
At least for this pronounced Hawaiian shade ;
I really can't imagine how a man
Could love a girl dyed to a chronic tan.

RALPH

Someone has said, 'Love goes where it is sent.'

ETHEL (*sadly*)

I think that true ; one cannot guide its bent.
But I must go ; and will you come along ?
Your mother said to bring you.

RALPH

Not quite yet ;
I'll wait until that bird completes its song :
The last I'll hear, till many a sun has set.
Just tell the folks I'll meet them on the pier.

[*Exit* ETHEL, *looking disappointed*

RALPH (*sitting down in a reverie*)

A nice girl, Ethel ; but, by Jove, it's queer
The way a fellow's stubborn mind will turn

To something that he should forget. That face—
I saw once on a San Francisco street,
How well I do recall the time and place!
"A girl from Honolulu," someone said.
I wonder where she is now! Married? Dead?

[*A silent reverie for a moment. Then speaks again.*]

I planned this trip with just one crazy thought—
To look upon that strange girl's face once more.
That is the luny project which has brought
The four of us to this idyllic shore.

[*Laughs and lights a cigar.*]

My scheme was worked with such consummate care
That mother thinks *she* planned the whole affair.
Then she invited Ethel as her guest.

[*Silence for a moment.*]

Well, sometimes mothers know just what is best
For wayward sons.

And yet, and yet, and yet,
Why is it one girl's face I can't forget?
Why is it that I feel despondent hearted
In missing that fool hope for which I started?
Four thousand miles is something of a chase
To run to cover one elusive face
And then to fail.

[*Reverie. A chant is heard outside. The man listens. The chant ceases and then a maiden slowly approaches calling out her flower wares,*

which she carries in a basket; she wears several lais herself, on hat and neck. She does not observe the man at first.]

FLOWER GIRL (*calls in a musical voice*)

Lais, lais, royal lais, beautiful flowers in bloom;
Colours of splendour, fragrance so tender,
Blossoms to brighten your room;
Lais, lais, royal lais, who buys—

RALPH (*leans forward and says aside*

(Eve and the serpent meet in Paradise.)

[*He moves forward as the maid enters the doorway. Recognition shows in both faces. Then the maiden recovers her self-possession and starts to go.*]

RALPH (*with sudden boldness and excitement*)

I'll buy you out, in case you then are free
To stay awhile, beneath this banyan tree,
And tell me all about your lovely land.

FLOWER GIRL (*with dignity*)

Your pardon, sir, I do not understand.

RALPH (*who seems drunk with exhilaration*)

Oh well, 'tis plain enough; from realms of snow
I landed here some little time ago,

A lonely orphan, without kith or kin.
I need a friend.

[FLOWER GIRL *gives him an indignant, surprised glance. Then speaks with quiet sarcasm.*]

Sir, they will take you in
On Hotel Street. The Y.M.C.A. there
Shelters all homeless youths within its pale.

RALPH (*shaking his head sadly*)

They wouldn't take *me* in. I am from Yale.

GIRL (*with mock sympathy*)

Oh, that *is* sad. Because no skill or tact
You might employ could ever hide the fact
From all the world, wherever you might be.
Now Harvard, Princeton, Stanford men, we see
And never know, until they speak the name;
But Yale—it bears its brand.

RALPH (*reproachfully*)

You're making game
Of me, and of my College, cruel girl

[*Approaches her excitedly.*]

Come, drop those flowers, and let us have a whirl.
I'll give you both the Yale Yell and the Boola,
If you will dance for me your famous Hula.

GIRL (*drawing back haughtily*)

I dance the Hula? You mistake, my friend;
You heard my chant, but did not comprehend
The meaning of it. Hark, while I repeat it.
[*Repeats the chant.*]

RALPH (*puzzled*)

I'm sure there's nothing in the world can beat it;
But—er—the language is a little queer;
I did not quite catch all the words, I fear;
Besides, I'm so distracted by your face.

GIRL (*proudly*)

That chant relates the conquests of my race;
Though I am poor, and hawk about these lais
To earn my bread, yet in the olden days
There was no prouder family on earth
Than mine. But Polynesian pride of birth
Is quite beyond the white man's scope of brain,
And so perchance I speak to you in vain.
[*Takes her flowers and starts to go.*]

RALPH (*intercepts her*)

Great Scott! but you are splendid when you're mad!
Now, please, don't go; I'm really not so bad:
I don't mean half I say.

GIRL (*turns blazing eyes upon him*)

Oh, all you men
Of pallid blood, again, and yet again
Have offered insults to our island races.
I own we once were savage; and the traces
Of those wild days remain; but, sir, go back
A little way, on *your* ancestral track,
And see what you will find. A horde of bold
And lawless cut-throats, started many an old
And purse-proud race; and brutal strength became
The bloody groundwork for pretentious fame
When Might was Right. If every royal tree
Were dug up by the roots, the world would see
That common mud first mothered the poor sprout.
Your race is higher than my own, no doubt;
Then shame upon you, for the poor display
Of noble manhood that you make to-day,
Thinking each brown-faced girl your lawful prey.
[*Turns her back upon him and starts to go.*]

RALPH (*pleadingly*)

Oh, say now, let a fellow have a show.
I never meant to rouse your anger so;
I only meant—I—well, you see the change
Of climate was so sudden; and the strange
And gorgeous scenery, and your glorious eyes

Upset my brain. But you have put me wise.
I own that I had heard—

[*Hesitates, and* GIRL *breaks forth again.*]

Oh, yes, I know you heard
Wild tales of Honolulu ; and were stirred
With high ambitions to return to Yale,
The envied hero of a wilder tale ;
You thought each maiden on this Isle, perchance
Wore skirts of grass, and danced the Hula dance ;
And gave her lips to any man for gold.

RALPH (*interrupting*)

Oh, 'pon my honour, I was not so bold—

GIRL (*ignoring, and with vehemence*)

You thought the old-time licence still prevailed ;
You did not know across the heavens had sailed
A beautiful star in brilliancy arrayed,
The *Self-Respecting New Hawaiian Maid*—
Who prides herself upon her blood and birth
And holds her virtue at its priceless worth ;—
And stands undaunted in her rightful place
Snow white of soul, however brown of face,
Warmer in blood than your white women are
And yet more moral in her life by far
Than many a leader in your halls of fashion.

RALPH (*gazing at her with admiration*)

I vow I like to see you in a passion ;
Such royal rage ! Your forbear was, I know—
Kame-a-lili-like-kalico,
Or some such name : who got in that great tiff
And tumbled all his foes down off the cliff.
I feel I'm lying with them in the valley
While you stand all triumphant, on the Pali.

GIRL (*smiling and softened*)

You mean Kamehameha First, I'm sure.
Yes, I am of his line.

RALPH

May it endure
Until the end of time ; for you are *great ;*
The world needs women like you.

[GIRL *turns to go.*

RALPH

Oh, now wait !
I want some flowers ; please hang about my neck
A dozen lais ; and give me half a peck
Of nice bouquets ; then I will hire a band
And celebrate my entrance to your land.
I'll dance the Hula, up and down the street
And cry *Aloha*, to each girl I meet ;
And if she frowns, and calls me cad, and churl,

I'll shout, Long Live the New Hawaiian Girl—
Rah, rah, rah, Yale, Yale, Yale!
[*A Hawaiian Band is heard approaching.*]

GIRL (*laughingly, as she hangs lais about his neck*)
Well, there's your band; and since you are so kind,
To purchase all my flowers, I've half a mind
To favour you with, not the Hula, sir,
But something more refined, and prettier.
I'll teach it to you; ask the band out there
To play the Hula Kui dancing air;
Then follow all I do, and copy me.
This is the way it starts, now one, two, three.
[*After the dance ends,* RALPH *approaches the* GIRL *with tense face and speaks with great seriousness.*]
Girl, though I do not even know your name,
Yet here I stand, and offer you my own;
It was for you I came, for you alone,
Across the half world. I have never known
Forgetfulness, since first your face I saw.
In coming here, I but obeyed Love's law;
I thought it fancy, passion, or caprice;
I know now it is *Love.*

FLOWER GIRL (*with emotion*)
I pray you, cease;
You do not understand yourself; go, go;
[*Urges him towards exit.*

RALPH (*seizing her hand*)

I will not go until I hear you say
That you remember even as I do
That brief encounter on the street one day.

[FLOWER GIRL *turns her face away and tries to free her hand.*]

RALPH (*exultantly*)

Oh, it is *Fate;* and Fate we must obey.

[*Takes ring from his finger.*]

Let the ship go; but with my heart I stay.

[*Attempts to place ring on* GIRL'S *finger. She wrenches her hand free, and stands with both hands behind her as she speaks with suppressed emotion.*]

The heart of every Island girl on earth
I think hides one sweet dream, and it is this:
To one day meet a man of higher birth—
To win his heart—to feel his tender kiss—
And sail with him to some far distant land.
This too has been my dream; wherein your face
Shone like a beacon.

[*Repels* RALPH *as he starts forward.*]

But I know your race,
Too well, too well. I know how such dreams end,
You could not claim me in your land, my friend,
For colour prejudice is rampant there.

RALPH (*impetuously*)

But I will stay for ever here, I swear—

FLOWER GIRL

Nay, do not swear, you would but break the vow
As many another has. Our tropic sun
Affects men like a fever; when 'tis run,
Then their delusions pass. Oh leave me now;
I hear the whistle of your ship—adieu!
Alohoa oie—may God be with you.

[*Enter* ETHEL *hurriedly*]

Come, Ralph, your mother and your sister wait
Quite frantic at the pier, lest you be late.
They sent me for you.

[*Exit* RALPH *with* ETHEL; *he looks back and flings* GIRL *a wreath.* GIRL *smiles and sings Hawaiian song, picks up the wreath and drops face in her hands as Curtain goes down.*]

MAURINE AND OTHER POEMS

MAURINE

PART I

I SAT and sewed, and sang some tender tune,
Oh, beauteous was that morn in early June!
Mellow with sunlight, and with blossoms fair;
The climbing rose-tree grew about me there,
And checked with shade the sunny portico
Where, morns like this, I came to read, or sew.

I heard the gate click, and a firm, quick tread
Upon the walk. No need to turn my head;
I would mistake, and doubt my own voice sounding,
Before his step upon the gravel bounding.
In an unstudied attitude of grace,
He stretched his comely form; and from his face
He tossed the dark, damp curls; and at my knees,
With his broad hat he fanned the lazy breeze,
And turned his head, and lifted his large eyes,
Of that strange hue we see in ocean dyes,
And call it blue sometimes and sometimes green,
And save in poet eyes, not elsewhere seen.

"Lest I should meet with my fair lady's scorning,
For calling quite so early in the morning,
I've brought a passport that can never fail,"
He said, and, laughing, laid the morning mail
Upon my lap. "I'm welcome? so I thought!
I'll figure by the letters that I brought
How glad you are to see me. Only one?
And that one from a lady? I'm undone!
That, lightly skimmed, you'll think me such bore,
And wonder why I did not bring you four.
It's ever thus: a woman cannot get
So many letters that she will not fret
O'er one that did not come."

"I'll prove you wrong,"
I answered gaily, "here upon the spot!
This little letter, precious if not long,
Is just the one, of all you might have brought,
To please me. You have heard me speak I'm sure,
Of Helen Trevor: she writes here to say
She's coming out to see me; and will stay
Till Autumn, maybe. She is, like her note,
Petite and dainty, tender, loving, pure.
You'd know her by a letter that she wrote,
For a sweet-tinted thing. 'Tis always so:—
Letters all blots, though finely written, show
A slovenly person. Letters stiff and white
Bespeak a nature honest, plain, upright.

And tissuey, tinted, perfumed notes, like this,
Tell of a creature formed to pet and kiss."

My listener heard me with a slow, odd smile ;
Stretched in abandon at my feet, the while,
He fanned me idly with his broad-brimmed hat.
"Then all young ladies must be formed for that !"
He laughed, and said.

"Their letters read, and look,
As like as twenty copies of one book.
They're written in a dainty, spider scrawl,
To 'darling, precious Kate,' or 'Fan,' or 'Moll.'
The 'dearest, sweetest' friend they ever had.
They say they 'want to see you, oh, so bad !'
Vow they'll 'forget you, never, *never*, oh !'
And then they tell about a splendid beau—
A lovely hat—a charming dress, and send
A little scrap of this to every friend.
And then to close, for lack of something better,
They beg you'll 'read and burn this horrid letter.'"

He watched me, smiling. He was prone to vex
And hector me with flings upon my sex.
He liked, he said, to have me flash and frown,
So he could tease me, and then laugh me down.
My storms of wrath amused him very much :
He liked to see me go off at a touch ;

Anger became me—made my colour rise,
And gave an added lustre to my eyes.
So he would talk—and so he watched me now,
To see the hot flush mantle cheek and brow.

Instead, I answered coolly, with a smile,
Felling a seam with utmost care, meanwhile.
"The caustic tongue of Vivian Dangerfield
Is barbed as ever, for my sex, this morn.
Still unconvinced, no smallest point I yield.
Woman I love, and trust, despite your scorn.
There is some truth in what you say? Well, yes!
Your statements usually hold more or less.
Some women write weak letters—(some men do;)
Some make professions, knowing them untrue.
And woman's friendship, in the time of need,
I own, too often proves a broken reed.
But I believe, and ever will contend,
Woman can be a sister woman's friend
Giving from out her large heart's bounteous store
A living love—claiming to do no more
Than, through and by that love, she knows she can:
And living by her professions, *like a man*.
And such a tie, true friendship's silken tether,
Binds Helen Trevor's heart and mine together.
I love her for her beauty, meekness, grace;
For her white lily soul and angel face.
She loves me, for my greater strength, maybe;
Loves—and would give her heart's best blood for me.

And I, to save her from a pain, or cross,
Would suffer any sacrifice or loss.
Such can be woman's friendship for another.
Could man give more, or ask more from a brother?"

I paused: and Vivian leaned his massive head
Against the pillar of the portico,
Smiled his slow, sceptic smile, then laughed, and said:
"Nay, surely not—if what you say be so.
You've made a statement, but no proof's at hand.
Wait—do not flash your eyes so! Understand
I think you quite sincere in what you say:
You love your friend, and she loves you, to-day;
But friendship is not friendship at the best
Till circumstances put it to the test.
Man's, less demonstrative, stands strain and tear,
While woman's, half profession, fails to wear.
Two women love each other passing well—
Say Helen Trevor and Maurine La Pelle,
Just for example.

Let them daily meet
At ball and concert, in the church and street,
They kiss and coo, they visit, chat, caress;
Their love increases, rather than grows less;
And all goes well, till 'Helen dear' discovers
That 'Maurine darling' wins too many lovers.

And then her 'precious friend,' her 'pet,' her 'sweet,'
Becomes a 'minx, a 'creature all deceit.'

Let Helen smile too oft on Maurine's beaux,
Or wear more stylish or becoming clothes,
Or sport a hat that has a longer feather—
And lo! the strain has broken 'friendship's tether.'
Maurine's sweet smile becomes a frown or pout;
'She's just begun to find that Helen out.'
The breach grows wider—anger fills each heart;
They drift asunder, whom 'but death could part.'
You shake your head? Oh, well we'll never know!
It is not likely Fate will test you so.
You'll live, and love; and, meeting twice a year,
While life shall last, you'll hold each other dear.
I pray it may be so; it were not best
To shake your faith in woman by the test.
Keep your belief, and nurse it while you can.
I've faith in woman's friendship too—for man!
They're true as steel, as mothers, friends, and wives:
And that's enough to bless us all our lives.
That man's a selfish fellow, and a bore,
Who is unsatisfied and asks for more."
"But there is need of more!" I here broke in.
"I hold that woman guilty of a sin,
Who would not cling to, and defend another,
As nobly as she would stand by a brother.
Who would not suffer for a sister's sake,
And, were there need to prove her friendship, make
'Most any sacrifice, nor count the cost.
Who would not do this for a friend is lost
To every nobler principle."

"Shame, shame!"
Cried Vivian, laughing, "for you now defame
The whole sweet sex; since there's not one would do
The thing you name, nor would I want her to.
I love the sex. My mother was a woman--
I hope my wife will be, and wholly human.
And if she wants to make some sacrifice,
I'll think her far more sensible and wise
To let her husband reap the benefit,
Instead of some old maid or senseless chit.
Selfish? Of course! I hold all love is so:
And I shall love my wife right well, I know.
Now there's a point regarding selfish love,
You thirst to argue with me, and disprove.
But since these cosy hours will soon be gone,
And all our meetings broken in upon,
No more of these rare moments must be spent
In vain discussions, or in argument.
I wish Miss Trevor was in—Jericho!
(You see the selfishness begins to show.)
She wants to see you?—So do I: but she
Will gain her wish, by taking you from me.
'Come all the same?' that means I'll be allowed
To realise that 'three can make a crowd.'
I do not like to feel myself *de trop*.
With two girl cronies would I not be so?
My ring would interrupt some private chat.
You'd ask me in and take my cane and hat,

And speak about the lovely summer day,
And think—'The lout! I wish he'd kept away.'
Miss Trevor'd smile, but just to hide a pout
And count the moments till I was shown out.
And, while I twirled my thumbs, I would sit wishing
That I had gone off hunting birds, or fishing,
No, thanks, Maurine! The iron hand of Fate
(Or otherwise Miss Trevor's dainty fingers,)
Will bar my entrance into Eden's gate;
And I shall be like some poor soul that lingers
At heaven's portal, paying the price of sin,
Yet hoping to be pardoned and let in."

He looked so melancholy sitting there,
I laughed outright. "How well you act a part;
You look the very picture of despair!
You've missed your calling, sir! suppose you start
Upon a starring tour, and carve your name
With Booth's and Barrett's on the heights of Fame
But now, tabooing nonsense, I shall send
For you to help me entertain my friend,
Unless you come without it. 'Cronies?' True,
Wanting our 'private chats' as cronies do.
And we'll take those, while you are reading Greek,
Or writing 'Lines to Dora's brow' or 'cheek.'
But when you have an hour or two of leisure,
Call as you now do, and afford like pleasure.
For never yet did heaven's sun shine on,
Or stars discover, that phenomenon,

In any country, or in any clime:
Two maids so bound, by ties of mind and heart,
They did not feel the heavy weight of time
In weeks of scenes wherein no man took part.
God made the sexes to associate:
Nor law of man, nor stern decree of Fate;
Can ever undo what His hand has done,
And, quite alone, make happy either one.
My Helen is an only child:—a pet
Of loving parents: and she never yet
Has been denied one boon for which she pleaded.
A fragile thing, her lightest wish was heeded.
Would she pluck roses? They must first be shorn
By careful hands, of every hateful thorn,
And loving eyes must scan the pathway where
Her feet may tread, to see no stones are there.
She'll grow dull here, in this secluded nook,
Unless you aid me in the pleasant task
Of entertaining. Drop in with your book—
Read, talk, sing for her sometimes. What I ask,
Do once, to please me: then there'll be no need
For me to state the case again, or plead.
There's nothing like a woman's grace and beauty
To waken mankind to a sense of duty."

"I bow before the mandate of my queen:
Your slightest wish is law, Ma Belle Maurine,"

He answered, smiling, "I'm at your command;
Point but one lily finger, or your wand,
And you will find a willing slave obeying.
There goes my dinner bell! I hear it saying
I've spent two hours here, lying at your feet,
Not profitable, maybe—surely sweet.
All time is money; now were I to measure
The time I spend here by its solid pleasure,
And that were coined in dollars, then I've laid
Each day a fortune at your feet, fair maid
There goes that bell again! I'll say good-bye,
Or clouds will shadow my domestic sky.
I'll come again, as you would have me do,
And see your friend, while she is seeing you.
That's like by proxy being at a feast;
Unsatisfactory, to say the least."

He drew his fine shape up, and trod the land
With kingly grace. Passing the gate, his hand
He lightly placed the garden wall upon,
Leaped over like a leopard, and was gone.

And, going, took the brightness from the place,
Yet left the June day with a sweeter grace,
And my young soul, so steeped in happy dreams,
Heaven itself seemed shown to me in gleams.
There is a time with lovers, when the heart
First slowly rouses from its dreamless sleep,

To all the tumult of a passion life,
Ere yet have wakened jealousy and strife.
Just as a young, untutored child will start
Out of a long hour's slumber, sound and deep,
And lie and smile with rosy lips and cheeks,
In a sweet, restful trance, before it speaks.
A time when yet no word the spell has broken,
Save what the heart unto the soul has spoken,
In quickened throbs, and sighs but half suppressed
A time when that sweet truth, all unconfessed,
Gives added fragrance to the summer flowers,
A golden glory to the passing hours,
A hopeful beauty to the plainest face,
And lends to life a new and tender grace.
When the full heart has climbed the heights of bliss,
And smiling, looks back o'er the golden past,
I think it finds no sweeter hour than this
In all love-life. For, later, when the last
Translucent drop o'erflows the cup of joy,
And love, more mighty than the heart's control,
Surges in words of passion from the soul,
And vows are asked and given, shadows rise
Like mists before the sun in noonday skies,
Vague fears, that prove the brimming cup's alloy;
A dread of change—the crowning moment's curse,
Since what is perfect, change but renders worse:
A vain desire to cripple Time, who goes
Bearing our joys away, and bringing woes.

And later, doubts and jealousies awaken,
And plighted hearts are tempest-tossed and shaken.
Doubt sends a test, that goes a step too far,
A wound is made, that, healing, leaves a scar,
Or one heart, full with love's sweet satisfaction,
Thinks truth once spoken always understood,
While one is pining for the tender action
And whispered word by which, of old, 'twas wooed.

But this blest hour, in love's glad, golden day,
Is like the dawning, ere the radiant ray
Of glowing Sol has burst upon the eye,
But yet is heralded in earth and sky,
Warm with its fervour, mellow with its light,
While Care still slumbers in the arms of night.
But Hope, awake, hears happy birdlings sing,
And thinks of all a summer day may bring.

In this sweet calm, my young heart lay at rest,
Filled with a blissful sense of peace; nor guessed
That sullen clouds were gathering in the skies
To hide the glorious sun, ere it should rise.

PART II

To little birds that never tire of humming
About the garden in the summer weather,
Aunt Ruth compared us, after Helen's coming,
As we two roamed, or sat and talked together.

Twelve months apart, we had so much to say
Of school days gone—and time since passed away;
Of that old friend, and this; of what we'd done;
Of how our separate paths in life had run;
Of what we would do, in the coming years;
Of plans and castles, hopes and dreams and fears.
All these, and more, as soon as we found speech,
We touched upon, and skimmed from this to that.
But at the first each only gazed on each,
And, dumb with joy, that did not need a voice
Like lesser joys, to say, "Lo! I rejoice,"
With smiling eyes and clasping hands we sat
Wrapped in that peace, felt but with those dear,
Contented just to know each other near.
But when this silent eloquence gave place
To words, 'twas like the rising of a flood
Above a dam. We sat there, face to face,
And let our talk glide on where'er it would.
Speech never halting in its speed or zest,
Save when our rippling laughter let it rest;
Just as a stream will sometimes pause and play
About a bubbling spring, then dash away.
No wonder, then, the third day's sun was nigh
Up to the zenith when my friend and I
Opened our eyes from slumber long and deep:
Nature demanding recompense for hours
Spent in the portico, among the flowers,
Halves of two nights we should have spent in sleep.

So this third day, we breakfasted at one:
Then walked about the garden in the sun,
Hearing the thrushes and the robins sing,
And looking to see what buds were opening.

The clock chimed three, and we yet strayed at will
About the yard in morning dishabille,
When Aunt Ruth came, with apron o'er her head,
Holding a letter in her hand, and said,
"Here is a note, from Vivian I opine;
At least his servant brought it. And now, girls,
You may think this is no concern of mine,
But in my day young ladies did not go
Till almost bed-time roaming to and fro
In morning wrappers, and with tangled curls,
The very pictures of forlorn distress.
'Tis three o'clock, and time for you to dress.
Come! read your note and hurry in, Maurine.
And make yourself fit object to be seen."

Helen was bending o'er an almond bush,
And ere she looked up I had read the note,
And calmed my heart, that, bounding, sent a flush
To brow and cheek, at sight of aught *he* wrote
"Ma Belle Maurine:" (so Vivian's billet ran,)
"Is it not time I saw your cherished guest?
'Pity the sorrows of a poor young man,'
Banished from all that makes existence blest.

I'm dying to see—your friend ; and I will come
And pay respects, hoping you'll be at home
To-night at eight. Expectantly, V. D."

Inside my belt I slipped the billet, saying,
" Helen, go make yourself most fair to see :
Quick ! hurry now ! no time for more delaying !
In just five hours a caller will be here.
And you must look your prettiest, my dear !
Begin your toilet right away. I know
How long it takes you to arrange each bow—
To twist each curl, and loop your skirts aright.
And you must prove you are *au fait* to-night,
And make a perfect toilet : for our caller
Is man, and critic, poet, artist, scholar,
And views with eyes of all."

"Oh, oh ! Maurine,"
Cried Helen with a well-feigned look of fear,
" You've frightened me so I shall not appear :
I'll hide away, refusing to be seen
By such an ogre. Woe is me ! bereft
Of all my friends, my peaceful home I've left,
And strayed away into the dreadful wood
To meet the fate of poor Red Riding Hood.
No, Maurine, no ! you've given me such a fright,
I'll not go near your ugly wolf to-night."
Meantime we'd left the garden ; and I stood

In Helen's room, where she had thrown herself
Upon a couch, and lay, a winsome elf,
Pouting and smiling, cheek upon her arm,
Not in the least a portrait of alarm.
"Now, sweet!" I coaxed, and knelt by her, "Be good!
Go curl your hair; and please your own Maurine,
By putting on that lovely grenadine.
Not wolf, nor ogre, neither Caliban,
Nor Mephistopheles, you'll meet to-night,
But what the ladies call 'a nice young man'!
Yet one worth knowing—strong with health and might
Of perfect manhood; gifted, noble, wise;
Moving among his kind with loving eyes,
And helpful hand; progressive, brave, refined,
After the image of his Maker's mind."

"Now, now, Maurine!" cried Helen, "I believe
It is your lover coming here this eve.
Why have you never written of him, pray?
Is the day set?—and when? Say, Maurine, say!"

Had I betrayed by some too fervent word
The secret love that all my being stirred?
My lover? Ay! My heart proclaimed him so;
But first *his* lips must win the sweet confession,
Ere even Helen be allowed to know.
I must straightway erase the slight impression
Made by the words just uttered.

"Foolish child!"
I gaily cried, "your fancy's straying wild.
Just let a girl of eighteen hear the name
Of maid and youth uttered about one time,
And off her fancy goes, at break-neck pace,
Defying circumstances, reason, space—
And straightway builds romances so sublime
They put all Shakespeare's dramas to the shame.
This Vivian Dangerfield is neighbour, friend,
And kind companion; bringing books and flowers,
And, by his thoughtful actions without end,
Helping me pass some otherwise long hours;
But he has never breathed a word of love.
If you still doubt me, listen while I prove
My statement by the letter that he wrote.
'Dying to meet—my friend!' (she could not see
The dash between that meant so much to me).
'Will come this eve, at eight, and hopes we may
Be in to greet him.' Now I think you'll say
'Tis not much like a lover's tender note."

We laugh, we jest, not meaning what we say;
We hide our thoughts, by light words lightly spoken,
And pass on heedless, till we find one day
They've bruised our hearts, or left some other broken.

I sought my room, and trilling some blithe air,
Opened my wardrobe, wondering what to wear.

Momentous question! femininely human!
More than all others, vexing mind of woman,
Since that sad day, when in her discontent,
To search for leaves, our fair first mother went.
All undecided what I should put on,
At length I made selection of a lawn—
White, with a tiny pink vine overrun—
My simplest robe, but Vivian's favourite one.
And placing a single flow'ret in my hair,
I crossed the hall to Helen's chamber; where
I found her with her fair locks all let down,
Brushing the kinks out, with a pretty frown.
'Twas like a picture, or a pleasing play,
To watch her make her toilet. She would stand,
And turn her head first this, and then that way,
Trying effect of ribbon, bow or band.
Then she would pick up something else, and curve
Her lovely neck, with cunning, bird-like grace,
And watch the mirror while she put it on,
With such a sweetly grave and thoughtful face;
And then to view it all would sway and swerve
Her lithe young body, like a graceful swan.

Helen was over medium height, and slender
Even to frailty. Her great, wistful eyes
Were like the deep blue of autumnal skies;
And through them looked her soul, large, loving, tender.

Her long, light hair was lustreless, except
Upon the ends, where burnished sunbeams slept,
And on the earlocks; and she looped the curls
Back with a shell comb, studded thick with pearls,
Costly yet simple. Her pale loveliness,
That night, was heightened by her rich, black dress,
That trailed behind her, leaving half in sight
Her taper arms, and shoulders marble white.

I was not tall as Helen, and my face
Was shaped and coloured like my grandsire's race;
For through his veins my own received the warm,
Red blood of Southern France, which curved my form,
And glowed upon my cheek in crimson dyes,
And bronzed my hair, and darkled in my eyes.
And as the morning trails the skirts of night,
And dusky night puts on the garb of morn,
And walk together when the day is born,
So we two glided down the hall and stair,
Arm clasping arm, into the parlour, where
Sat Vivian, bathed in sunset's gorgeous light.
He rose to greet us. Oh! his form was grand;
And he possessed that power, strange, occult,
Called magnetism, lacking better word,
Which moves the world, achieving great result
Where genius fails completely. Touch his hand,
It thrilled through all your being—meet his eye,
And you were moved, yet knew not how, or why,

Let him but rise, you felt the air was stirred
By an electric current.

This strange force
Is mightier than genius. Rightly used,
It leads to grand achievements ; all things yield
Before its mystic presence, and its field
Is broad as earth and heaven. But abused,
It sweeps like a poison simoon on its course,
Bearing miasma in its scorching breath,
And leaving all it touches struck with death.

Far-reaching science shall yet tear away
The mystic garb that hides it from the day,
And drag it forth and bind it with its laws,
And make it serve the purposes of men,
Guided by common-sense and reason. Then
We'll hear no more of séance, table-rapping,
And all that trash, o'er which the world is gaping,
Lost in effect, while science seeks the cause.

Vivian was not conscious of his power :
Or, if he was, knew not its full extent.
He knew his glance would make a wild beast cower,
And yet he knew not that his large eyes sent
Into the heart of woman the same thrill
That made the lion servant of his will.
And even strong men felt it.

He arose,
Reached forth his hand, and in it clasped my own,
While I held Helen's; and he spoke some word
Of pleasant greeting in his low, round tone,
Unlike all other voices I have heard.
Just as the white cloud, at the sunrise, glows
With roseate colours, so the pallid hue
Of Helen's cheek, like tinted sea-shells grew.
Through mine, his hand caused hers to tremble; such
Was the all-mast'ring magic of his touch.
Then we sat down, and talked about the weather,
The neighbourhood—some author's last new book.
But, when I could, I left the two together
To make acquaintance, saying I must look
After the chickens—my especial care;
And ran away and left them, laughing, there.

Knee-deep, through clover, to the poplar grove,
I waded, where my pets were wont to rove:
And there I found the foolish mother hen
Brooding her chickens underneath a tree,
An easy prey for foxes. "Chick-a-dee,"
Quoth I, while reaching for the downy things
That, chirping, peeped from out the mother-wings,
"How very human is your folly! When
There waits a haven, pleasant, bright, and warm,
And one to lead you thither from the storm

And lurking dangers, yet you turn away,
And, thinking to be your own protector, stray
Into the open jaws of death : for, see!
An owl is sitting in this very tree
You thought safe shelter. Go now to your pen."
And, followed by the clucking, clamorous hen,
So like the human mother here again,
Moaning because a strong, protecting arm
Would shield her little ones from cold and harm,
I carried back my garden hat brimful
Of chirping chickens, like white balls of wool
And snugly housed them.

And just then I heard
A sound like gentle winds among the trees,
Or pleasant waters in the summer, stirred
And set in motion by a passing breeze.
'Twas Helen singing : and, as I drew near,
Another voice, a tenor full and clear,
Mingled with hers, as murmuring streams unite,
And flow on stronger in their wedded might.

It was a way of Helen's, not to sing
The songs that other people sang. She took
Sometimes an extract from an ancient book ;
Again some floating, fragmentary thing.
And such she fitted to old melodies,
Or else composed the music. One of these

She sang that night; and Vivian caught the strain,
And joined her in the chorus, or refrain,

SONG.

Oh thou, mine other, stronger part!
Whom yet I cannot hear, or see,
Come thou, and take this loving heart,
That longs to yield its all to thee,
I call mine own—oh, come to me!
Love, answer back, I come to thee,
I come to thee.

This hungry heart, so warm, so large,
Is far too great a care for me.
I have grown weary of the charge
I keep so sacredly for thee.
Come thou, and take my heart from me.
Love, answer back, I come to thee,
I come to thee.

I am a-weary, waiting here
For one who tarries long for me.
Oh! art thou far, or art thou near?
And must I still be sad for thee?
Or wilt thou straightway come to me?
Love, answer, I am near to thee,
I come to thee.

The melody, so full of plaintive chords,
Sobbed into silence—echoing down the strings
Like voice of one who walks from us, and sings.
Vivian had leaned upon the instrument

The while they sang. But, as he spoke those words,
"Love, I am near to thee, I come to thee,"
He turned his grand head slowly round, and bent
His lustrous, soulful, speaking gaze on me.
And my young heart, eager to own its king,
Sent to my eyes a great, glad, trustful light
Of love and faith, and hung upon my cheek
Hope's rose-hued flag. There was no need to speak.
I crossed the room, and knelt by Helen. "Sing
That song you sang a fragment of one night
Out on the porch, beginning, 'Praise me not,'"
I whispered : and her sweet and plaintive tone
Rose, low and tender, as if she had caught
From some sad passing breeze, and made her own,
The echo of the wind-harp's sighing strain,
Or the soft music of the falling rain.

SONG.

O praise me not with your lips, dear one !
Though your tender words I prize.
But dearer by far is the soulful gaze
Of your eyes, your beautiful eyes,
Your tender, loving eyes.

O chide me not with your lips, dear one !
Though I cause your bosom sighs.
You can make repentance deeper far
By your sad, reproving eyes,
Your sorrowful, troubled eyes.

Words, at the best, are but hollow sounds ;
  Above, in the beaming skies,
The constant stars say never a word,
  But only smile with their eyes—
      Smile on with their lustrous eyes.

Then breathe no vow with your lips, dear one ;
  On the wingèd wind speech flies.
But I read the truth of your noble heart
  In your soulful, speaking eyes—
      In your deep and beautiful eyes.

The twilight darkened, round us, in the room,
While Helen sang ; and, in the gathering gloom,
Vivian reached out, and took my hand in his,
And held it so ; while Helen made the air
Languid with music. Then a step drew near,
And voice of Aunt Ruth broke the spell :
                                        "Dear ! dear !
Why, Maurie, Helen, children ! how is this ?
I hear you, but you have no light in there.
Your room is dark as Egypt. What a way
For folks to visit ! Maurie, go, I pray,
And order lamps."
                  And so there came a light,
And all the sweet dreams hovering around
The twilight shadows flitted in affright :
And e'en the music had a harsher sound.

In pleasant converse passed an hour away:
And Vivian planned a picnic for next day—
A drive the next, and rambles without end,
That he might help me entertain my friend.
And then he rose, bowed low, and passed from sight,
Like some great star that drops out from the night;
And Helen watched him through the shadows go,
And turned and said, her voice subdued and low,
"How tall he is! in all my life, Maurine,
A grander man I never yet have seen."

PART III

One golden twelfth-part of a checkered year;
One summer month, of sunlight, moonlight, mirth,
With not a hint of shadows lurking near,
Or storm-clouds brewing.

'Twas a royal day:
Voluptuous July held her lover, Earth,
With her warm arms, upon her glowing breast,
And twined herself about him, as he lay
Smiling and panting in his dream-stirred rest.
She bound him with her limbs of perfect grace,
And hid him with her trailing robe of green,
And wound him in her long hair's shimmering sheen,
And rained her ardent kisses on his face.
Through the glad glory of the summer land
Helen and I went wandering, hand in hand.

In winding paths, hard by the ripe wheat-field,
White with the promise of a bounteous yield,
Across the late shorn meadow—down the hill,
Red with the tiger-lily blossoms, till
We stood upon the borders of the lake,
That like a pretty, placid infant, slept
Low at its base : and little ripples crept
Along its surface, just as dimples chase
Each other o'er an infant's sleeping face.
Helen in idle hours had learned to make
A thousand pretty, feminine knick-knacks :
For brackets, ottomans, and toilet stands—
Labour just suited to her dainty hands.
That morning she had been at work in wax,
Moulding a wreath of flowers for my room—
Taking her patterns from the living blows,
In all their dewy beauty and sweet bloom,
Fresh from my garden. Fuchsia, tulip, rose,
And trailing ivy, grew beneath her touch,
Resembling the living plants as much
As life is copied in the form of death :
These lacking but the perfume, and that, breath.

And now the wreath was all completed, save
The mermaid blossom of all flowerdom,
A water lily, dripping from the wave.
And 'twas in search of it that we had come
Down to the lake, and wandered on the beach,

To see if any lilies grew in reach.
Some broken stalks, where flowers late had been;
Some buds, with all their beauties folded in,
We found, but not the treasure that we sought.
And then we turned our footsteps to the spot
Where, all impatient of its chain, my boat,
The *Swan*, rocked, asking to be set afloat.
It was a dainty row-boat—strong, yet light;
Each side a swan was painted snowy white:
A present from my uncle, just before
He sailed, with Death, to that mysterious strand,
Where freighted ships go sailing evermore,
But none return to tell us of the land.
I freed the *Swan*, and slowly rowed about,
Wherever sea-weeds, grass, or green leaves lifted
Their tips above the water. So we drifted,
While Helen, opposite, leaned idly out
And watched for lilies in the waves below,
And softly crooned some sweet and dreamy air,
That soothed me like a mother's lullabies.
I dropped the oars, and closed my sun-kissed eyes,
And let the boat go drifting here and there.
Oh, happy day! The last of that brief time
Of thoughtless youth, when all the world seems bright,
Ere that disguised angel men called Woe
Leads the sad heart through valleys dark as night,
Up to the heights exalted and sublime.
On each blest, happy moment, I am fain

To linger long, ere I pass on to pain
And sorrow that succeeded.

From day-dreams,
As golden as the summer noontide's beams,
I was awakened by a voice that cried:
"Strange ship, ahoy! Fair frigate, whither bound?"
And, starting up, I cast my gaze around,
And saw a sail-boat o'er the water glide
Close to the *Swan*, like some live thing of grace;
And from it looked the glowing, handsome face
Of Vivian.

"Beauteous sirens of the sea,
Come sail across the raging main with me!"
He laughed; and leaning, drew our drifting boat
Beside his own. "There, now! step in!" he said;
"I'll land you anywhere you want to go—
My boat is safer far than yours, I know:
And much more pleasant with its sails all spread.
The *Swan?* We'll take the oars, and let it float
Ashore at leisure. You, Maurine, sit there—
Miss Helen here. Ye gods and little fishes!
I've reached the height of pleasure, and my wishes.
Adieu despondency! farewell to care!"

'Twas done so quickly: that was Vivian's way.
He did not wait for either yea or nay.

He gave commands, and left you with no choice
But just to do the bidding of his voice.
His rare, kind smile, low tones, and manly face
Lent to his quick imperiousness a grace
And winning charm, completely stripping it
Of what might otherwise have seemed unfit.
Leaving no trace of tyranny, but just
That nameless force that seemed to say, "You must."
Suiting its pretty title of the *Dawn*,
(So named, he said, that it might rhyme with *Swan*),
Vivian's sail-boat was carpeted with blue,
While all its sails were of a pale rose hue.
The daintiest craft that flirted with the breeze;
A poet's fancy, in an hour of ease.

Whatever Vivian had was of the best.
His room was like some Sultan's in the East.
His board was always spread as for a feast,
Whereat, each meal, he was both host and guest.
He would go hungry sooner than he'd dine
At his own table if 'twere illy set.
He so loved things artistic in design—
Order and beauty, all about him. Yet
So kind he was, if it befell his lot
To dine within the humble peasant's cot,
He made it seem his native soil to be,
And thus displayed the true gentility.

Under the rosy banners of the *Dawn*,
Around the lake we drifted on, and on.
It was a time for dreams, and not for speech.
And so we floated on in silence, each
Weaving the fancies suiting such a day.
Helen leaned idly o'er the sail-boat's side,
And dipped her rosy fingers in the tide;
And I among the cushions half reclined,
Half sat, and watched the fleecy clouds at play,
While Vivian with his blank-book, opposite,
In which he seemed to either sketch or write,
Was lost in inspiration of some kind.

No time, no change, no scene, can e'er efface
My mind's impression of that hour and place;
It stands out like a picture. O'er the years,
Black with their ropes of sorrow—veiled with tears
Lying with all their lengthened shapes between,
Untouched, undimmed, I still behold that scene.
Just as the last of Indian-summer days,
Replete with sunlight, crowned with amber haze,
Followed by dark and desolate December,
Through all the months of winter we remember.

The sun slipped westward. That peculiar change
Which creeps into the air, and speaks of night
While yet the day is full of golden light,
We felt steal o'er us.

Vivian broke the spell
Of dream-fraught silence, throwing down his book:
"Young ladies, please allow me to arrange
These wraps about your shoulders. I know well
The fickle nature of our atmosphere—
Her smile swift followed by a frown or tear—
And go prepared for changes. Now you look,
Like—like—oh, where's a pretty simile?
Had you a pocket mirror here you'd see
How well my native talent is displayed
In shawling you. Red on the brunette maid;
Blue on the blonde—and quite without design
(Oh, where *is* that comparison of mine?)
Well—like a June rose and a violet blue
In one bouquet. I fancy that will do.
And now I crave your patience and a boon,
Which is to listen, while I read my rhyme,
A floating fancy of the summer time.
'Tis neither witty, wonderful, nor wise,
So listen kindly—but don't criticise
My maiden effort of the afternoon:

"If all the ships I have at sea
Should come a-sailing home to me,
Ah, well! the harbour could not hold
So many sails as there would be
If all my ships came in from sea.

"If half my ships came home from sea,
And brought their precious freight to me,

Ah, well! I should have wealth as great
As any king who sits in state—
So rich the treasures that would be
In half my ships now out at sea.

"If just one ship I have at sea
Should come a-sailing home to me,
Ah, well! the storm-clouds then might frown;
For if the others all went down
Still rich and proud and glad I'd be,
If that one ship came back to me.

"If that one ship went down at sea,
And all the others came to me,
Weighed down with gems and wealth untold,
With glory, honour, riches, gold,
The poorest soul on earth I'd be,
If that one ship came not to me.

"O skies be calm! O winds blow free—
Blow all my ships safe home to me.
But if thou sendest some a-wrack
To never more come sailing back,
Send any—all that skim the sea,
But bring my love-ship home to me."

Helen was leaning by me, and her head
Rested against my shoulder: as he read,
I stroked her hair, and watched the fleecy skies,
And when he finished, did not turn my eyes.
I felt too happy and too shy to meet
His gaze just then. I said, "'Tis very sweet,

And suits the day; does it not, Helen, dear?"
But Helen, voiceless, did not seem to hear.
"'Tis strange," I added, "how you poets sing
So feelingly about the very thing
You care not for! and dress up an ideal
So well, it looks a living, breathing real!
Now, to a listener, your love song seemed
A heart's out-pouring; yet I've heard you say
Almost the opposite; or that you deemed
Position, honour, glory, power, fame,
Gained without loss of conscience or good name,
The things to live for."

"Have you? Well, you may,"
Laughed Vivian, "but 'twas years—or months ago!
And Solomon says wise men change, you know!
I now speak truth! if she I hold most dear
Slipped from my life, and no least hope were left,
My heart would find the years more lonely here
Than if I were of wealth, fame, friends, bereft,
And sent, an exile, to a foreign land."
His voice was low, and measured: as he spoke,
New, unknown chords of melody awoke
Within my soul. I felt my heart expand
With that sweet fulness born of love. I turned
To hide the blushes on my cheek that burned,
And leaning over Helen, breathed her name.
She lay so motionless I thought she slept:
But, as I spoke, I saw her eyes unclose,

And o'er her face a sudden glory swept,
And a slight tremor thrilled all through her frame.
"Sweet friend," I said, "your face is full of light:
What were the dreams that made your eyes so bright?"
She only smiled for answer, and arose
From her reclining posture at my side,
Threw back the clust'ring ringlets from her face
With a quick gesture, full of easy grace,
And, turning, spoke to Vivian. "Will you guide
The boat up near that little clump of green
Off to the right? There's where the lilies grow.
We quite forgot our errand here, Maurine,
And our few moments have grown into hours.
What will Aunt Ruth think of our ling'ring so?
There—that will do—now I can reach the flowers."

"Hark! just hear that!" and Vivian broke forth singing,
"'Row, brothers, row.' The six o'clock bell's ringing!
Who ever knew three hours to go so fast
In all the annals of the world, before?
I could have sworn not over one had passed.
Young ladies, I am forced to go ashore!
I thank you for the pleasure you have given;
This afternoon has been a glimpse of heaven.
Good-night—sweet dreams! and by your gracious leave,
I'll pay my compliments to-morrow eve."

A smile, a bow; and he had gone his way:
And, in the waning glory of the day,
Down cool, green lanes, and through the length'ning
shadows,
Silent, we wandered back across the meadows.
The wreath was finished, and adorned my room;
Long afterward, the lilies' copied bloom
Was like a horrid spectre in my sight,
Staring upon me morning, noon, and night.

The sun went down. The sad new moon rose up,
And passed before me like an empty cup,
The Great Unseen brims full of pain or bliss,
And gives His children, saying, "Drink of this."

A light wind, from the open casement, fanned
My brow and Helen's, as we, hand in hand,
Sat looking out upon the twilight scene,
In dreamy silence. Helen's dark-blue eyes,
Like two lost stars that wandered from the skies
Some night adown the meteor's shining track,
And always had been grieving to go back,
Now gazed up, wistfully, at heaven's dome,
And seemed to recognise and long for home.
Her sweet voice broke the silence: "Wish, Maurine,
Before you speak! you know the moon is new,
And anything you wish for will come true

Before it wanes. I do believe the sign!
Now tell me your wish, and I'll tell you mine."
I turned and looked up at the slim young moon;
And, with an almost superstitious heart,
I sighed, "Oh, new moon! help me, by thine art,
To grow all grace and goodness, and to be
Worthy the love a true heart proffers me."
Then smiling down, I said, "Dear one! my boon,
I fear, is quite too silly or too sweet
For my repeating: so we'll let it stay
Between the moon and me. But if I may
I'll listen now to your wish. Tell me, please!" —

All suddenly she nestled at my feet,
And hid her blushing face upon my knees.
Then drew my hand against her glowing cheek,
And, leaning on my breast, began to speak,
Half sighing out the words my tortured ear
Reached down to catch, while striving not to hear.

"Can you not guess who 'twas about, Maurine?
Oh, my sweet friend! you must ere this have seen
The love I tried to cover from all eyes
And from myself. Ah, foolish little heart!
As well it might go seeking for some art
Whereby to hide the sun in noonday skies.
When first the strange sound of his voice I heard,
Looked on his noble face, and touched his hand,

My slumb'ring heart thrilled through and through
and stirred
As if to say, 'I hear, and understand.'
And day by day mine eyes were blest beholding
The inner beauty of his life, unfolding
In countless words and actions that portrayed
The noble stuff of which his soul was made.
And more and more I felt my heart upreaching
Toward the truth, drawn gently by his teaching,
As flowers are drawn by sunlight. And there grew
A strange, shy something in its depths, I knew
At length was love, because it was so sad
And yet so sweet, and made my heart so glad;
Yet seemed to pain me. Then, for very shame,
Lest all should read my secret and its name,
I strove to hide it in my breast away,
Where God could see it only. But each day
It seemed to grow within me, and would rise,
Like my own soul, and look forth from my eyes,
Defying bonds of silence; and would speak,
In its red-lettered language, on my cheek,
If but his name was uttered. You were kind,
My own Maurine! as you alone could be,
So long the sharer of my heart and mind,
While yet you saw, in seeming not to see.
In all the years we have been friends, my own,
And loved as women very rarely do,
My heart no sorrow and no joy has known

It has not shared at once, in full, with you.
And I so longed to speak to you of this,
When first I felt its mingled pain and bliss;
Yet dared not, lest you, knowing him, should say,
In pity for my folly—'Lack-a-day!
You are undone: because no mortal art
Can win the love of such a lofty heart.'
And so I waited, silent and in pain,
Till I could know I did not love in vain.
And now I know, beyond a doubt or fear.
Did he not say, 'If she I hold most dear
Slipped from my life, and no least hope were left,
My heart would find the years more lonely here
Than if I were of wealth, fame, friends, bereft,
And sent, an exile, to a foreign land'?
Oh, darling, you must *love* to understand
The joy that thrilled all through me at those words.
It was as if a thousand singing birds
Within my heart broke forth in notes of praise.
I did not look up, but I knew his gaze
Was on my face, and that his eyes must see
The joy I felt almost transfigured me.
He loves me—loves me! so the birds kept singing,
And all my soul with that sweet strain is ringing.
If there were added but one drop of bliss,
No more my cup would hold: and so, this eve
I made a wish that I might feel his kiss
Upon my lips, ere yon pale moon should leave

The stars all lonely, having waned away,
Too old and weak and bowed with care to stay."

Her voice sighed in silence. While she spoke
My heart writhed in me, praying she would cease—
Each word she uttered falling like a stroke
On my bare soul. And now a hush like death,
Save that 'twas broken by a quick-drawn breath,
Fell 'round me, but brought not the hoped-for peace.
For when the lash no longer leaves its blows,
The flesh still quivers, and the blood still flows.

She nestled on my bosom like a child,
And 'neath her head my tortured heart throbbed wild
With pain and pity. She had told her tale—
Her self-deceiving story to the end.
How could I look down on her as she lay
So fair, and sweet, and lily-like, and frail—
A tender blossom on my breast, and say,
"Nay, you are wrong—you do mistake, dear friend!
'Tis I am loved, not you"? Yet that were truth,
And she must know it later.

'Should I speak,
And spread a ghastly pallor o'er the cheek
Flushed now with joy? And while I, doubting,
pondered,
She spoke again. "Maurine! I oft have wondered

Why you and Vivian were not lovers. He
Is all a heart could ask its king to be ;
And you have beauty, intellect and youth.
I think it strange you have not loved each other—
Strange how he could pass by you for another
Not half so fair or worthy. Yet I know
A loving Father pre-arranged it so.
I think my heart has known him all these years,
And waited for him. And if when he came
It had been as a lover of my friend,
I should have recognised him, all the same,
As my soul-mate, and loved him to the end,
Hiding my grief, and forcing back my tears
Till on my heart, slow dropping, day by day,
Unseen they fell, and wore it all away.
And so a tender Father kept him free,
With all the largeness of his love, for me—
For me, unworthy such a precious gift !
Yet I will bend each effort of my life
To grow in grace and goodness, and to lift
My soul and spirit to his lofty height,
So to deserve that holy name, his wife.
Sweet friend, it fills my whole heart with delight
To breathe its long hid secret in your ear.
Speak, my Maurine, and say you love to hear !"

The while she spoke, my active brain gave rise
To one great thought of mighty sacrifice

And self-denial. Oh! it blanched my cheek,
And wrung my soul; and from my heart it drove
All life and feeling. Coward-like, I strove
To send it from me; but I felt it cling
And hold fast on my mind like some live thing;
And all the Self within me felt its touch
And cried, "No, no! I cannot do so much—
I am not strong enough—there is no call."
And then the voice of Helen bade me speak,
And with a calmness borne of nerve, I said,
Scarce knowing what I uttered, "Sweetheart, all
Your joys and sorrows are with mine own wed.
I thank you for your confidence, and pray
I may deserve it always. But, dear one,
Something—perhaps our boat-ride in the sun—
Has set my head to aching. I must go
To bed directly; and you will, I know,
Grant me your pardon, and another day
We'll talk of this together. Now good-night,
And angels guard you with their wings of light."

I kissed her lips, and held her on my heart,
And viewed her as I ne'er had done before.
I gazed upon her features o'er and o'er;
Marked her white, tender face—her fragile form,
Like some frail plant that withers in the storm;
Saw she was fairer in her new-found joy
Than e'er before; and thought, "Can I destroy

God's handiwork, or leave it at the best
A broken harp, while I close clasp my bliss?"
I bent my head and gave her one last kiss,
And sought my room, and found there such relief
As sad hearts feel when first alone with grief.

The moon went down, slow sailing from my sight,
And left the stars to watch away the night.
O stars, sweet stars, so changeless and serene!
What depths of woe your pitying eyes have seen!
The proud sun sets, and leaves us with our sorrow,
To grope alone in darkness till the morrow.
The languid moon, e'en if she deigns to rise,
Soon seeks her couch, grown weary of our sighs;
But from the early gloaming till the day
Sends golden-liveried heralds forth to say
He comes in might; the patient stars shine on,
Steadfast and faithful, from twilight to dawn.
And, as they shone upon Gethsemane,
And watched the struggle of a God-like soul,
Now from the same far height they shone on me
And saw the waves of anguish o'er me roll.

The storm had come upon me all unseen:
No sound of thunder fell upon my ear;
No cloud arose to tell me it was near;
But under skies all sunlit, and serene,
I floated with the current of the stream,

And thought life all one golden-haloed dream.
When lo! a hurricane, with awful force,
Swept swift upon its devastating course,
Wrecked my frail bark, and cast me on the wave
Where all my hopes had found a sudden grave.
Love makes us blind and selfish; otherwise
I had seen Helen's secret in her eyes;
So used I was to reading every look
In her sweet face, as I would read a book.
But now, made sightless by love's blinding rays,
I had gone on unseeing, to the end
Where Pain dispelled the mist of golden haze
That walled me in, and lo! I found my friend
Who journeyed with me—at my very side—
Had been sore wounded to the heart, while I,
Both deaf and blind, saw not, nor heard her cry.
And then I sobbed, "O God! I would have died
To save her this." And as I cried in pain,
There leaped forth from the still, white realm of
Thought
Where Conscience dwells, that unimpassioned spot
As widely different from the heart's domain
As north from south—the impulse felt before,
And put away; but now it rose once more,
In greater strength, and said, "Heart, wouldst thou
prove
What lips have uttered? Then go, lay thy love
On Friendship's altar, as thy offering."

"Nay!" cried my heart, "ask any other thing—
Ask life itself—'twere easier sacrifice.
But ask not love, for that I cannot give."

"But," spoke the voice, "the meanest insect dies,
And is no hero! heroes dare to live
When all that makes life sweet is snatched away."
So with my heart, in converse, till the day,
In gold and crimson billows, rose and broke,
The voice of Conscience, all unwearied, spoke.
Love warred with Friendship, heart with Conscience
fought,
Hours rolled away, and yet the end was not:
And wily Self, tricked out like tenderness,
Sighed, "Think how one, whose life thou wert to
bless,
Will be cast down, and grope in doubt and fear!
Wouldst thou wound him, to give thy friend relief?
Can wrong make right?
"Nay!" Conscience said, "but Pride
And Time can heal the saddest hurts of Love.
While Friendship's wounds gape wide and yet more
wide,
And bitter fountains of the spirit prove."

At length, exhausted with the wearing strife,
I cast the new-found burden of my life
On God's broad breast, and sought that deep repose
That only he who watched with sorrow knows.

PART IV

"Maurine, Maurine, 'tis ten o'clock! arise,
My pretty sluggard, open those dark eyes
And see where yonder sun is! Do you know
I made my toilet just four hours ago?"

'Twas Helen's voice: and Helen's gentle kiss
Fell on my cheek. As from a deep abyss,
I drew my weary self from that strange sleep
That rests not nor refreshes. Scarce awake
Or conscious, yet there seemed a heavy weight
Bound on my breast, as by a cruel Fate.
I knew not why, and yet I longed to weep.
Some dark cloud seemed to hang upon the day;
And, for a moment, in that trance I lay,
When suddenly the truth did o'er me break,
Like some great wave upon a helpless child.
The dull pain in my breast grew like a knife—
The heavy throbbing of my heart grew wild,
And God gave back the burden of the life
He kept what time I slumbered.

"You are ill,"

Cried Helen, "with that blinding headache still!
You look so pale and weary. Now let me
Play nurse, Maurine, and care for you to-day!
And first I'll suit some dainty to your taste,
And bring it to you, with a cup of tea."

And off she ran, not waiting my reply.
But, wanting most the sunshine and the light,
I left my couch, and clothed myself in haste,
And, kneeling, sent to God an earnest cry
For help and guidance.
"Show Thou me the way,
Where duty leads, for I am blind! my sight
Obscured by self. Oh, lead my steps aright!
Help me see the path: and if it may,
Let this cup pass:—and yet, Thou heavenly One,
Thy will in all things, not mine own, be done."
Rising, I went upon my way, receiving
The strength prayer gives always to hearts believing.
I felt that unseen hands were leading me,
And knew the end was peace.
"What! are you up?"
Cried Helen, coming with a tray, and cup,
Of tender toast and fragrant, smoking tea.
"You naughty girl! you should have stayed in bed
Until you ate your breakfast, and were better;
I've something hidden for you here—a letter.
But drink your tea before you read it, dear!
'Tis from some distant cousin, auntie said,
And so you need not hurry. Now be good,
And mind your Helen."
So, in passive mood,
I laid the still unopened letter near,
And loitered at my breakfast more to please

My nurse, than any hunger to appease.
Then listlessly I broke the seal and read
The few lines written in a bold free hand:
"New London, Canada. Dear Coz. Maurine!
(In spite of generations stretched between
Our natural right to that most handy claim
Of cousinship, we'll use it all the same)
I'm coming to see you; honestly, in truth!
I've threatened often—now I mean to act;
You'll find my coming is a stubborn fact.
Keep quiet, though, and do not tell Aunt Ruth.
I wonder if she'll know her petted boy
In spite of changes? Look for me until
You see me coming. As of old I'm still
Your faithful friend, and loving cousin, Roy."

So Roy was coming! He and I had played
As boy and girl, and later, youth and maid,
Full half our lives together. He had been,
Like me, an orphan; and the roof of kin
Gave both kind shelter. Swift years sped away
Ere change was felt: and then one summer day
A long-lost uncle sailed from India's shore—
Made Roy his heir and he was ours no more.

"He'd write us daily, and we'd see his face
Once every year." Such was his promise given

The morn he left. But now the years were seven
Since last he looked upon the olden place.
He'd been through college, travelled in all lands,
Sailed over seas, and trod the desert sands.
Would write and plan a visit, then, ere long,
Would write again from Egypt, or Hong Kong—
Some fancy called him thither unforeseen.
So years had passed, till seven lay between
His going and the coming of this note,
Which I hid in my bosom, and replied
To Aunt Ruth's queries, "What the truant wrote?"
By saying he was still upon the wing,
And merely dropped a line, while journeying,
To say he lived: and she was satisfied.

Sometimes it happens, in this world so strange,
A human heart will pass through mortal strife,
And writhe in torture: while the old sweet life,
So full of hope and beauty, bloom and grace,
Is slowly strangled by remorseless Pain:
And one stern, cold, relentless, takes its place—
A ghastly, pallid spectre of the slain.
Yet those in daily converse see no change
Nor dream the heart has suffered.

So that day
I passed along toward the troubled way
Stern duty pointed, and no mortal guessed
A mighty conflict had disturbed my breast.

I had resolved to yield up to my friend
The man I loved. Since she, too, loved him so
I saw no other way in honour left.
She was so weak and fragile, once bereft
Of this great hope, that held her with such power,
She would wilt down, like some frost-bitten flower,
And swift, untimely death would be the end.
But I was strong; and hardy plants, which grow
In out-door soil, can bear bleak winds that blow
From Arctic lands, whereof a single breath
Would lay the hot-house blossom low in death.
The hours went by, too slow, and yet too fast.
All day I argued with my foolish heart
That bade me play the shrinking coward's part
And hide from pain. And when the day had past
And time for Vivian's call drew near and nearer,
It pleaded, "Wait until the way seems clearer;
Say you are ill—or busy; keep away
Until you gather strength enough to play
The part you have resolved on."

"Nay, not so,"
Made answer clear-eyed Reason; "do you go
And put your resolution to the test.
Resolve, however nobly formed, at best
Is but a still-born babe of Thought until
It proves existence of its life and will
By sound or action."

So when Helen came
And knelt by me, her fair face all aflame
With sudden blushes, whispering, "My sweet!
My heart can hear the music of his feet,
Go down with me to meet him," I arose,
And went with her all calmly, as one goes
To look upon the dear face of the dead.

That eve I know not what I did or said.
I was not cold,—my manner was not strange;
Perchance I talked more freely than my wont,
But in my speech was naught could give affront;
Yet I conveyed, as only woman can,
That nameless *something* which bespeaks a change.

'Tis in the power of woman, if she be
Whole-souled and noble, free from coquetry—
Her motives all unselfish, worthy, good,
To make herself and feelings understood
By nameless acts, thus sparing what to man,
However gently answered, causes pain,
The offering of his hand and heart in vain.

She can be friendly, unrestrained and kind
Assume no airs of pride or arrogance;
But in her voice, her manner, and her glance,
Convey that mystic something, undefined,
Which men fail not to understand and read,
And, when not blind with egoism, heed.

My task was harder—'twas the slow undoing
Of long sweet months of unimpeded wooing.
It was to hide and cover and conceal
The truth, assuming what I did not feel.
It was to dam love's happy singing tide
That blessed me with its hopeful, tuneful tone
By feigned indifference, till it turned aside
And changed its channel, leaving me alone
To walk parched plains, and thirst for that sweet
draught
My lips had tasted, but another quaffed.
It could be done, for no words yet were spoken—
None to recall—no pledges to be broken.
"He will be grieved, then angry, cold, then cross,"
I reasoned, thinking what would be his part
In this strange drama. "Then, because he
Feels something lacking, to make good his loss
He'll turn to Helen, and her gentle grace
And loving acts will win her soon the place
I hold to-day; and like a troubled dream
At length, our past, when he looks back, will seem."

That evening passed with music, chat, and song,
But hours that once had flown on airy wings
Now limped on weary, aching limbs along,
Each moment like some dreaded step that brings
A twinge of pain.

As Vivian rose to go,
Slow bending to me from his greater height,
He took my hand, and, looking in my eyes,
With tender questioning and pained surprise,
Said, "Maurine, you are not yourself to-night;
What is it? Are you ailing?"
"Ailing? No,"
I answered, laughing lightly, "I am not;
Just see my cheeks sir—is it thin, or pale?
Now tell me, am I looking very frail?"
"Nay, nay," he answered, "it cannot be *seen*,
The change I speak of—'twas more in your mien—
Preoccupation, or—I know not what!
Miss Helen, am I wrong, or does Maurine
Seem to have something on her mind this eve?
"She does," laughed Helen, "and I do believe
I know what 'tis! A letter came to-day
Which she read slyly, and then hid away
Close to her heart, not knowing I was near,
And since she's been as you have seen her here.
See how she blushes! so my random shot
We must believe has struck a tender spot."

Her rippling laughter floated through the room,
And redder yet I felt the hot blood rise,
Then surge away, to leave me pale as death
Under the dark and swiftly gathering gloom
Of Vivian's questioning, accusing eyes,

That searched my soul. I almost shrieked beneath
That stern, fixed gaze, and stood spellbound until
He turned with sudden movement, gave his hand
To each in turn, and said : "You must not stand
Longer, young ladies, in this open door.
The air is heavy with a cold, damp chill.
We shall have rain to-morrow, or before.
Good-night."
He vanished in the darkling shade ;
And so the dreaded evening found an end,
That saw me grasp the conscience-whetted blade,
And strike a blow for honour and for friend.

"How swiftly passed the evening !" Helen sighed.
"How long the hours !" my tortured heart replied.
Joy, like a child, with lightsome steps doth glide
By Father Time, and, looking in his face,
Cries, snatching blossoms from the fair roadside,
"I could pluck more, but for thy hurried pace."
The while her elder brother Pain, man grown,
Whose feet are hurt by many a thorn and stone,
Looks to some distant hilltop, high and calm,
Where he shall find not only rest, but balm
For all his wounds, and cries, in tones of woe,
"Oh, Father Time ! why is thy pace so slow ?"

Two days, all sad with lonely wind and rain,
Went sobbing by, repeating o'er and o'er

The miserere, desolate and drear,
Which every human heart must sometime hear.
Pain is but little varied. Its refrain,
Whate'er the words are, is for aye the same.
The third day brought a change, for with it came
Not only sunny smiles to Nature's face,
But Roy, our Roy came back to us. Once more
We looked into his laughing, handsome eyes,
Which, while they gave Aunt Ruth a glad surprise
In no way puzzled her, for one glance told
What each succeeding one confirmed, that he
Who bent above her with the lissome grace
Of his fine form, though grown so tall, could be
No other than the Roy Montaine of old.

It was a sweet reunion, and he brought
So much of sunshine with him that I caught,
Just from his smile alone, enough of gladness
To make my heart forget a time its sadness,
We talked together of the dear old days:
Leaving the present, with its depths and heights
Of life's maturer sorrows and delights,
I turned back to my childhood's level land,
And Roy and I, dear playmates, hand in hand,
Wandered in mem'ry through the olden ways.

It was the second evening of his coming.
Helen was playing dreamily, and humming

Some wordless melody of white-souled thought,
While Roy and I sat by the open door,
Re-living childish incidents of yore.
My eyes were glowing, and my cheeks were hot
With warm young blood; excitement, joy, or pain
Alike would send swift coursing through each vein.
Roy, always eloquent, was waxing fine,
And bringing vividly before my gaze
Some old adventure of those halcyon days,
When suddenly, in pauses of the talk,
I heard a well-known step upon the walk,
And looked up quickly to meet full in mine
The eyes of Vivian Dangerfield. A flash
Shot from their depths :—a sudden blaze of light
Like that swift followed by the thunder's crash,
Which said, "Suspicion is confirmed by sight,"
As they fell on the pleasant doorway scene.
Then o'er his clear-cut face a cold, white look
Crept, like the pallid moonlight o'er a brook,
And, with a slight, proud bending of the head,
He stepped toward us haughtily, and said :
"Please pardon my intrusion, Miss Maurine,
I called to ask Miss Trevor for a book
She spoke of lending me; nay, sit you still,
And I, by grant of your permission, will
Pass by to where I hear her playing."

"Stay,"

I said, "one moment, Vivian, if you please;"

And suddenly bereft of all my ease,
And scarcely knowing what to do or say,
Confused as any schoolgirl, I arose,
And some way made each to the other known.
They bowed, shook hands, then Vivian turned away,
And sought out Helen, leaving us alone.

"One of Miss Trevor's or of Maurine's beaux?
Which may he be, who cometh like a prince
With haughty bearing and an eagle eye?"
Roy queried, laughing; and I answered, "Since
You saw him pass me for Miss Trevor's side,
I leave your own good judgment to reply."

And straightway caused the tide of talk to glide
In other channels, striving to dispel
The sudden gloom that o'er my spirit fell.

We mortals are such hypocrites at best!
When Conscience tries our courage with a test,
And points to some steep pathway, we set out
Boldly, denying any fear or doubt;
But pause before the first rock in the way,
And, looking back, with tears, at Conscience, say:
"We are so sad, dear Conscience! for we would
Most gladly do what to thee seemeth good;
But lo! this rock! we cannot climb it, so
Thou must point out some other way to go."
Yet secretly we are rejoicing: and,

When right before our faces, as we stand
In seeming grief, the rock is cleft in twain,
Leaving the pathway clear, we shrink in pain,
And, loth to go, by every act reveal
What we so tried from Conscience to conceal.

I saw that hour, the way made plain, to do
With scarce an effort what had seemed a strife
That would require the strength of my whole life.

Women have quick perceptions, and I knew
That Vivian's heart was full of jealous pain,
Suspecting—nay, *believing*—Roy Montaine
To be my lover. First my altered mien—
And next the letter—then the doorway scene—
My flushed face gazing in the one above
That bent so near me, and my strange confusion
When Vivian came all led to one conclusion:
That I had but been playing with his love,
As women sometimes cruelly do play
With hearts when their true lovers are away.

There could be nothing easier than just
To let him linger on in his belief
Till hourly-fed Suspicion and Distrust
Should turn to scorn and anger all his grief.
Compared with me, so doubly sweet and pure
Would Helen seem, my purpose would be sure
And certain of completion in the end.

But now, the way was made so straight and clear,
My coward heart shrank back in guilty fear,
Till Conscience whispered with her still small voice,
"The precious time is passing—make thy choice—
Resign thy love, or slay thy trusting friend."

The growing moon, watched by the myriad eyes
Of countless stars, went sailing through the skies,
Like some young prince, rising to rule a nation,
To whom all eyes are turned in expectation.
A woman who possesses tact and art
And strength of will can take the hand of doom,
And walk on, smiling sweetly as she goes,
With rosy lips, and rounded cheeks of bloom,
Cheating a loud-tongued world that never knows
The pain and sorrow of her hidden heart.
And so I joined in Roy's bright changing chat;
Answered his sallies—talked of this and that,
My brow unruffled as the calm, still wave
That tells not of the wrecked ship, and the grave
Beneath its surface.

Then we heard, ere long,
The sound of Helen's gentle voice in song,
And, rising, entered where the subtle power
Of Vivian's eyes, forgiving while accusing,
Finding me weak, had won me in that hour;
But Roy, always polite and debonair
Where ladies were, now hung about my chair

With nameless delicate attentions, using
That air devotional, and those small arts
Acquaintance with society imparts
To men gallant by nature.

'Twas my sex
And not myself he bowed to. Had my place
Been filled that evening by a dowager
Twice his own age, he would have given her
The same attentions. But they served to vex
Whatever hope in Vivian's heart remained.
The cold, white look crept back upon his face,
Which told how deeply he was hurt and pained.

Little by little all things had conspired
To bring events I dreaded, yet desired.
We were in constant intercourse: walks, rides,
Picnics and sails, filled weeks of golden weather,
And almost hourly we were thrown together.
No words were spoken of rebuke or scorn:
Good friends we seemed. But as a gulf divides
This land and that, though lying side by side,
So rolled a gulf between us—deep and wide—
The gulf of doubt, which widened slowly morn
And noon and night.

Free and informal were
These picnics and excursions. Yet, although
Helen and I would sometimes choose to go
Without our escorts, leaving them quite free,

It happened alway Roy would seek out me
Ere passed the day, while Vivian walked with
her.
I had no thought of flirting. Roy was just
Like some dear brother, and I quite forgot
The kinship was so distant it was not
Safe to rely upon in perfect trust,
Without reserve or caution. Many a time,
When there was some steep mountain-side to climb
And I grew weary, he would say, "Maurine,
Come rest you here." And I would go and lean
My head upon his shoulder, or would stand
And let him hold in his my willing hand,
The while he stroked it gently with his own.
Or I would let him clasp me with his arm,
Nor entertained a thought of any harm,
Nor once supposed but Vivian was alone
In his suspicions. But ere long the truth
I learned in consternation! both Aunt Ruth
And Helen honestly, in faith, believed
That Roy and I were lovers.

Undeceived,
Some careless words might open *Vivian's* eyes
And spoil my plans. So reasoning in this wise,
To all their sallies I in jest replied,
To naught assented, and yet naught denied,
With Roy unchanged remaining, confident
Each understood just what the other meant.

If I grew weary of this double part,
And self-imposed deception caused my heart
Sometimes to shrink, I needed but to gaze
On Helen's face : that wore a look ethereal,
As if she dwelt above the things material
And held communion with the angels. So
I fed my strength and courage through the days.
What time the harvest moon rose full and clear
And cast its ling'ring radiance on the earth,
We made a feast ; and called from far and near,
Our friends, who came to share the scene of mirth.
Fair forms and faces flitted to and fro ;
But none more sweet than Helen's. Robed in white,
She floated like a vision through the dance.
So frailly fragile and so phantom fair,
She seemed like some stray spirit of the air,
And was pursued by many an anxious glance
That looked to see her fading from the sight
Like figures that a dreamer sees at night.
And noble men and gallants graced the scene :
Yet none more noble or more grand of mien
Than Vivian—broad of chest and shoulder, tall
And finely formed, as any Grecian god
Whose high-arched foot on Mount Olympus trod.
His clear-cut face was beardless ; and, like those
Same Grecian statues, when in calm repose,
Was it in hue and feature. Framed in hair
Dark and abundant ; lighted by large eyes

That could be cold as steel in winter air,
Or warm and sunny as Italian skies.

Weary of mirth and music, and the sound
Of tripping feet, I sought a moment's rest
Within the lib'ry, where a group I found
Of guests, discussing with apparent zest
Some theme of interest—Vivian, near the while,
Leaning and listening with his slow, odd smile.
"Now, Miss La Pelle, we will appeal to you,"
Cried young Guy Semple, as I entered. "We
Have been discussing right before his face,
All unrebuked by him, as you may see,
A poem lately published by our friend:
And we are quite divided. I contend
The poem is a libel and untrue.
I hold the fickle women are but few,
Compared with those who are like yon fair moon
That, ever faithful, rises in her place
Whether she's greeted by the flowers of June
Or cold and dreary stretches of white space."

"Oh!" cried another, "Mr. Dangerfield,
Look to your laurels! or you needs must yield
The crown to Semple, who, 'tis very plain,
Has mounted Pegasus and grasped his mane."

All laughed: and then, as Guy appealed to me,
I answered lightly, "My young friend, I fear

You chose a most unlucky simile
To prove the truth of woman. To her place
The moon does rise—but with a different face
Each time she comes. But now I needs must hear
The poem read, before I can consent
To pass my judgment on the sentiment."

All clamoured that the author was the man
To read the poem: and, with tones that said
More than the cutting, scornful words he read,
Taking the book Guy gave him, he began:

HER LOVE.

The sands upon the ocean side
That change about with every tide,
And never true to one abide.
A woman's love I liken to.

The summer zephyrs, light and vain,
That sing the same alluring strain
To every grass blade on the plain—
A woman's love is nothing more.

The sunshine of an April day
That comes to warm you with its ray,
But while you smile has flown away—
A woman's love is like to this.

God made poor woman with no heart,
But gave her skill, and tact, and art,
And so she lives, and plays her part.
We must not blame, but pity her.

She leans to man—but just to hear
The praise he whispers in her ear,
Herself, not him, she holdeth dear—
Oh, fool! to be deceived by her.

To sate her selfish thirst she quaffs
The love of strong hearts in sweet draughts,
Then throws them lightly by and laughs,
Too weak to understand their pain.

As changeful as the winds that blow
From every region, to and fro,
Devoid of heart, she cannot know
The suffering of a human heart.

I knew the cold, fixed gaze of Vivian's eyes
Saw the slow colour to my forehead rise;
But lightly answered, toying with my fan,
"That sentiment is very like a man!
Men call us fickle, but they do us wrong;
We're only frail and helpless, men are strong;
And when love dies, they take the poor dead thing
And make a shroud out of their suffering,
And drag the corpse about with them for years.
But we?—we mourn it for a day with tears!
And then we robe it for its last long rest,
And being women, feeble things at best,
We cannot dig the grave ourselves. And so
We call strong-limbed New Love to lay it low;
Immortal sexton he! whom Venus sends
To do this service for her earthly friends,

The trusty fellow digs the grave so deep
Nothings disturbs the dead laid there to sleep."

The laugh that followed had not died away
Ere Roy Montaine came seeking me to say
The band was tuning for our waltz, and so
Back to the ballroom bore me. In the glow
And heat and whirl, my strength ere long was spent,
And I grew faint and dizzy, and we went
Out on the cool moonlighted portico,
And, sitting there, Roy drew my languid head
Upon the shelter of his breast, and bent
His smiling eyes upon me, as he said:
"I'll try the mesmerism of my touch
To work a cure: be very quiet now,
And let me make some passes o'er your brow.
Why, how it throbs! you've exercised too much!
I shall not let you dance again to-night."

Just then before us, in the broad moonlight,
Two forms were mirrored: and I turned my face
To catch the teasing and mischievous glance
Of Helen's eyes, as, heated by the dance,
Leaning on Vivian's arm, she sought this place.

"I beg your pardon," came in that round tone
Of his low voice. "I think we do intrude."
Bowing, they turned, and left us quite alone
Ere I could speak or change my attitude.

PART V

A visit to a cave some miles away
Was next in order. So, one sunny day,
Four prancing steeds conveyed a laughing load
Of merry pleasure-seekers o'er the road.
A basket picnic, music, and croquet
Were in the programme. Skies were blue and clear,
And cool winds whispered of the Autumn near.
The merry-makers filled the time with pleasure:
Some floated to the music's rhythmic measure,
Some played, some promenaded on the green.
Ticked off by happy hearts, the moments passed.
The afternoon, all glow and glimmer, came.
Helen and Roy were leaders of some game,
And Vivian was not visible.

"Maurine,
I challenge you to climb yon cliff with me!
And who shall tire, or reach the summit last
Must pay a forfeit," cried a romping maid.
"Come! start at once, or own you are afraid."
So challenged I made ready for the race,
Deciding first the forfeit was to be
A handsome pair of bootees to replace
The victor's loss who made the rough ascent.
The cliff was steep and stony. On we went
As eagerly as if the path was Fame,
And what we climbed for, glory and a name.

My hands were bruised; my garments sadly rent,
But on I clambered. Soon I heard a cry,
"Maurine! Maurine! my strength is wholly spent!
You've won the boots! I'm going back—good-bye!"
And back she turned, in spite of laugh and jeer.

I reached the summit: and its solitude,
Wherein no living creature did intrude,
Save some sad birds that wheeled and circled near,
I found far sweeter than the scene below.
Alone with One who knew my hidden woe,
I did not feel so much alone as when
I mixed with th' unthinking throngs of men.

Some flowers that decked the barren, sterile place
I plucked, and read the lesson they conveyed,
That in our lives, albeit dark with shade
And rough and hard with labour, yet may grow
The flowers of Patience, Sympathy, and Grace.

As I walked on in meditative thought,
A serpent writhed across my pathway; not
A large or deadly serpent; yet the sight
Filled me with ghastly terror and affright.
I shrieked aloud: a darkness veiled my eyes—
And I fell fainting 'neath the watchful skies.

I was no coward. Country-bred and born,
I had no feeling but the keenest scorn

For those fine lady "ah's" and "oh's" of fear
So much assumed (when any man is near).
But God implanted in each human heart
A natural horror, and a sickly dread
Of that accursèd, slimy, creeping thing
That squirms a limbless carcass o'er the ground.
And where that inborn loathing is not found
You'll find the serpent qualities instead.
Who fears it not, himself is next of kin,
And in his bosom holds some treacherous art
Whereby to counteract its venomed sting.
And all are sired by Satan—Chief of Sin.

Who loathes not that foul creature of the dust,
However fair in seeming, I distrust.

I woke from my unconsciousness, to know
I leaned upon a broad and manly breast,
And Vivian's voice was speaking, soft and low,
Sweet whispered words of passion, o'er and o'er.
I dared not breathe. Had I found Eden's shore?
Was this a foretaste of Eternal bliss?
"My love," he sighed, his voice like winds that moan
Before a rain in Summer-time, "my own,
For one sweet stolen moment, lie and rest
Upon this heart that loves and hates you both!
O fair false face! Why were you made so fair!
O mouth of Southern sweetness! that ripe kiss

That hangs upon you, I do take an oath
His lips shall never gather. There!—and there!
I steal it from him. Are you his—all his?
Nay, you are mine, this moment, as I dreamed—
Blind fool—believing you were what you seemed—
You would be mine in all the years to come.
Fair fiend! I love and hate you in a breath.
O God! if this white pallor were but *death*,
And I were stretched beside you cold and dumb,
My arms about you, so—in fond embrace!
My lips pressed, so—upon your dying face!"

"Woman, how dare you bring me to such shame!
How dare you drive me to an act like this,
To steal from your unconscious lips the kiss
You lured me on to think my rightful claim!
O frail and puny woman! could you know
The devil that you waken in the hearts
You snare and bind in your enticing arts,
The thin, pale stuff that in your veins doth flow
Would freeze in terror.

Strange you have such power
To please or pain us, poor, weak, soulless things—
Devoid of passion as a senseless flower!
Like butterflies, your only boast, your wings.
There, now I scorn you—scorn you from this hour,
And hate myself for having talked of love!"
He pushed me from him. And I felt as those

Doomed angels must, when pearly gates above
Are closed against them.
With a feignèd surprise
I started up and opened wide my eyes,
And looked about. Then in confusion rose
And stood before him.

"Pardon me, I pray!"
He said quite coldly. "Half an hour ago
I left you with the company below,
And sought this cliff. A moment since you cried,
It seemed, in sudden terror and alarm.
I came in time to see you swoon away.
You'll need assistance down the rugged side
Of this steep cliff. I pray you take my arm."

So, formal and constrained, we passed along,
Rejoined our friends and mingled with the throng,
To have no further speech again that day.

Next morn there came a bulky document,
The legal firm of Blank and Blank had sent,
Containing news unlooked for. An estate
Which proved a cosy fortune—nowise great
Or princely—had in France been left to me,
My grandsire's last descendant. And it brought
A sense of joy and freedom in the thought
Of foreign travel, which I hoped would be
A panacea for my troubled mind,

That longed to leave the olden scenes behind
With all their recollections, and to flee
To some strange country.

I was in such haste
To put between me and my native land
The briny ocean's desolating waste,
I gave Aunt Ruth no peace, until she planned
To sail that week, two months; though she was fain
To wait until the Springtime. Roy Montaine
Would be our guide and escort.

No one dreamed
The cause of my strange hurry, but all seemed
To think good fortune had quite turned my brain.
One bright October morning, when the woods
Had donned their purple mantles and red hoods
In honour of the Frost King, Vivian came,
Bringing some green leaves, tipped with crimson flame,—
First trophies of the Autumn time.

And Roy
Made a proposal that we all should go
And ramble in the forest for a while.
But Helen said she was not well—and so
Must stay at home. Then Vivian, with a smile,
Responded, "I will stay and talk to you,
And they may go;" at which her two cheeks grew
Like twin blush roses—dyed with love's red wave,
Her fair face shone transfigured with great joy.

And Vivian saw—and suddenly was grave.
Roy took my arm in that protecting way
Peculiar to some men, which seems to say,
"I shield my own," a manner pleasing, e'en
When we are conscious that it does not mean
More than a simple courtesy. A woman
Whose heart is wholly feminine and human,
And not unsexed by hobbies, likes to be
The object of that tender chivalry,
That guardianship which man bestows on her,
Yet mixed with deference; as if she were
Half child, half angel.
Though she may be strong,
Noble and self-reliant, not afraid
To raise her hand and voice against all wrong
And all oppression, yet if she be made,
With all the independence of her thought,
A woman womanly, as God designed,
Albeit she may have as great a mind
As man, her brother, yet his strength of arm,
His muscle and his boldness she has not,
And cannot have without she loses what
Is far more precious, modesty and grace.
So, walking on in her appointed place,
She does not strive to ape him, nor pretend
But that she needs him for a guide and friend,
To shield her with his greater strength from harm.

We reached the forest; wandered to and fro
Through many a winding path and dim retreat,
Till I grew weary: when I chose a seat
Upon an oak-tree, which had been laid low
By some wind storm, or by some lightning stroke.
And Roy stood just below me, where the ledge
On which I sat sloped steeply to the edge
Of sunny meadows lying at my feet.
One hand held mine; the other grasped a limb
That cast its checkered shadows over him;
And, with his head thrown back, his dark eyes raised
And fixed upon me, silently he gazed
Until I, smiling, turned to him and spoke:
"Give words, my cousin, to those thoughts that rise,
And, like dumb spirits, look forth from your eyes."

The smooth and even darkness of his cheek
Was stained one moment by a flush of red.
He swayed his lithe form nearer as he stood
Still clinging to the branch above his head.
His brilliant eyes grew darker; and he said,
With sudden passion, "Do you bid me speak;
I cannot, then, keep silence if I would.
That hateful fortune, coming as it did,
Forbade my speaking sooner; for I knew
A harsh-tongued world would quickly misconstrue
My motive for a meaner one. But, sweet,
So big my heart has grown with love for you

I cannot shelter it or keep it hid.
And so I cast it throbbing at your feet,
For you to guard and cherish, or to break.
Maurine, I love you better than my life.
My friend—my cousin—be still more, my wife!
Maurine, Maurine, what answer do you make?"

I scarce could breathe for wonderment; and numb
With truth that fell too suddenly, sat dumb
With sheer amaze, and stared at Roy with eyes
That looked no feeling but complete surprise.
He swayed so near his breath was on my cheek.
"Maurine, Maurine," he whispered, "will you speak?

Then suddenly, as o'er some magic glass
One picture in a score of shapes will pass,
I seemed to see Roy glide before my gaze.
First, as the playmate of my earlier days—
Next, as my kin—and then my valued friend,
And last, my lover. As when colours blend
In some unlooked-for group before our eyes,
We hold the glass, and look them o'er and o'er,
So now I gazed on Roy in his new guise,
In which he ne'er appeared to me before.

His form was like a panther's in its grace,
So lithe and supple, and of medium height,
And garbed in all the elegance of fashion.
His large black eyes were full of fire and passion,

And in expression fearless, firm, and bright.
His hair was like the very deeps of night,
And hung in raven clusters 'round a face
Of dark and flashing beauty.

He was more
Like some romantic maiden's grand ideal
Than like a common being. As I gazed
Upon the handsome face to mine upraised,
I saw before me, living, breathing, real,
The hero of my early day-dreams : though
So full my heart was with that clear-cut face,
Which, all unlike, yet claimed the hero's place,
I had not recognised him so before,
Or thought of him, save as a valued friend.
So now I called him, adding,

"Foolish boy!
Each word of love you utter aims a blow
At that sweet trust I had reposed in you.
I was so certain I had found a true,
Steadfast man friend, on whom I could depend,
And go on wholly trusting to the end.
Why did you shatter my delusion, Roy,
By turning to a lover ?"

"Why, indeed!
Because I loved you more than any brother,
Or any friend could love." Then he began
To argue like a lawyer, and to plead
With all his eloquence. And, listening,

I strove to think it was a goodly thing
To be so fondly loved by such a man,
And it were best to give his wooing heed,
And not deny him. Then before my eyes,
In all its clear-cut majesty, that other
Haughty and poet-handsome face would rise
And rob my purpose of all life and strength.

Roy urged and argued, as Roy only could,
With that impetuous, boyish eloquence.
He held my hands, and vowed I must, and should
Give some least hope; till, in my own defence,
I turned upon him, and replied at length:
"I thank you for the noble heart you offer:
But it deserves a true one in exchange.
I could love you if I loved not another
Who keeps my heart; so I have none to proffer."

Then, seeing how his dark eyes flashed, I said:
"Dear Roy! I know my words seem very strange;
But I love one I cannot hope to wed.
A river rolls between us, dark and deep.
To cross it—were to stain with blood my hand.
You force my speech on what I fain would keep
In my own bosom, but you understand?
My heart is given to love that's sanctified,
And now can feel no other.

Be you kind,
Dear Roy, my brother! speak of this no more,
Lest pleading and denying should divide
The hearts so long united. Let me find
In you my cousin and my friend of yore.
And now come home. The morning, all too soon
And unperceived, has melted into noon.
Helen will miss us, and we must return."

He took my hand, and helped me to arise,
Smiling upon me with his sad, dark eyes,
Where passion's fires had, sudden, ceased to burn.

"And so," he said, "too soon and unforeseen
My friendship melted into love, Maurine.
But, sweet! I am not wholly in the blame
For what you term my folly. You forgot,
So long we'd known each other, I had not
In truth a brother's or a cousin's claim.
But I remembered, when through every nerve
Your lightest touch went thrilling; and began
To love you with that human love of man
For comely woman. By your coaxing arts,
You won your way into my heart of hearts,
And all Platonic feelings put to rout.
A maid should never lay aside reserve
With one who's not her kinsman, out and out.
But as we now with measured steps, retrace

The path we came, e'en so my heart I'll send,
At your command, back to the olden place,
And strive to love you only as a friend."
I felt the justice of his mild reproof,
But answered, laughing, "'Tis the same old cry:
'The woman tempted me, and I did eat.'
Since Adam's time we've heard it. But I'll try
And be more prudent, sir, and hold aloof
The fruit I never once had thought so sweet
'Twould tempt you any. Now go dress for dinner,
Thou sinned against! as also will the sinner.
And guard each act, that no least look betray
What's passed between us."

Then I turned away
And sought my room, low humming some old air
That ceased upon the threshold; for mine eyes
Fell on a face so glorified and fair
All other senses, merged in that of sight,
Were lost in contemplation of the bright
And wond'rous picture, which had otherwise
Made dim my vision.

Waiting in my room,
Her whole face lit as by an inward flame
That sheds its halo 'round her, Helen stood;
Her fair hands folded like a lily's leaves
Weighed down by happy dews of summer eves.
Upon her cheek the colour went and came
As sunlight flickers o'er a bed of bloom;

And, like some slim young sapling of the wood,
Her slender form leaned slightly; and her hair
Fell 'round her loosely, in long curling strands
All unconfined, and as by loving hands
Tossed into bright confusion.

Standing there,
Her starry eyes uplifted, she did seem
Like some unearthly creature of a dream;
Until she started forward, gliding slowly,
And broke the breathless silence, speaking lowly,
As one grown meek, and humble in an hour,
Bowing before some new and mighty power.

"Maurine, Maurine!" she murmured, and again,
"Maurine, my own sweet friend, Maurine!"

And then,
Laying her love-light hands upon my head,
She crowned, and looked into my eyes, and said
With voice that bore her joy in ev'ry tone,
As winds that blow across a garden bed
Are weighed with fragrance, "He is mine alone,
And I am his—all his—his very own.
So pledged this hour, by that most sacred tie
Save one beneath God's over-arching sky.
I could not wait to tell you of my bliss:
I want your blessing, sweetheart! and your kiss."
So hiding my heart's trouble with a smile,
I leaned and kissed her dainty mouth; the while

I felt a guilt-joy, as of some sweet sin,
When my lips fell where his so late had been.
And all day long I bore about with me
A sense of shame—yet mixed with satisfaction,
As some starved child might steal a loaf, and be
Sad with the guilt resulting from her action,
While yet the morsel in her mouth was sweet.
That ev'ning, when the house had settled down
To sleep and quiet, to my room there crept
A lithe young form, robed in a long white gown:
With steps like fall of thistle-down she came,
Her mouth smile-wreathed; and, breathing low my
name,
Nestled in graceful beauty at my feet.

"Sweetheart," she murmured softly, "ere I sleep,
I needs must tell you all my tale of joy.
Beginning where you left us—you and Roy.
You saw the colour flame upon my cheek
When Vivian spoke of staying. So did he;—
And, when we were alone, he gazed at me
With such a strange look in his wond'rous eyes.
The silence deepened; and I tried to speak
Upon some common topic, but could not,
My heart was in such tumult.
In this wise
Five happy moments glided by us, fraught
With hours of feeling. Vivian rose up then,

And came and stood by me, and stroked my hair,
And, in his low voice, o'er and o'er again,
Said, 'Helen, little Helen, frail and fair.'
Then took my face, and turned it to the light,
And looking in my eyes, and seeing what
Was shining from them, murmured, sweet and low,
'Dear eyes, you cannot veil the truth from sight.
You love me Helen! answer, is it so?'
And I made answer straightway, 'With my life
And soul and strength I love you, O my love!'
He leaned and took me gently to his breast,
And said, 'Here then this dainty head shall rest
Henceforth for ever: O my little dove!
My lily-bud—my fragile blossom-wife!'

And then I told him all my thoughts; and he
Listened, with kisses for his comments, till
My tale was finished. Then he said, 'I will
Be frank with you, my darling, from the start,
And hide no secret from you in my heart.
I love you, Helen, but you are not first
To rouse that love to being. Ere we met
I loved a woman madly—never dreaming
She was not all in truth she was in seeming.
Enough! she proved to be that thing accursed
Of God and man—a wily vain coquette.
I hate myself for having loved her. Yet
So much my heart spent on her, it must give

A love less ardent, and less prodigal,
Albeit just as tender and as true—
A milder, yet a faithful love to you.
Just as some evil fortune might befall
A man's great riches, causing him to live
In some low cot, all unpretending, still
As much his home—as much his loved retreat,
As was the princely palace on the hill,
E'en so I give you all that's left, my sweet!
Of my heart-fortune.'

'That were more to me,'
I made swift smiling answer, 'than to be
The worshipped consort of a king.' And so
Our faith was pledged. But Vivian would not go
Until I vowed to wed him New Year day.
And I am sad because you go away
Before that time. I shall not feel half wed
Without you here. Postpone your trip and stay,
And be my bridesmaid."

"Nay, I cannot, dear!
'Twould disarrange our plans for half a year.
I'll be in Europe New Year day," I said,
"And send congratulations by the cable."
And from my soul thanked Providence for sparing
The pain, to me, of sharing in, and wearing,
The festal garments of a wedding scene,
While all my heart was hung with sorrow's sable.
Forgetting for a season, that between

The cup and lip lies many a chance of loss,
I lived in my near future, confident
All would be as I planned it ; and, across
The briny waste of waters, I should find
Some balm and comfort for my troubled mind.
The sad Fall days, like maidens auburn-tressed
And amber-eyed, in purple garments dressed,
Passed by, and dropped their tears upon the tomb
Of fair Queen Summer, buried in her bloom.

Roy left us for a time, and Helen went
To make the nuptial preparations. Then,
Aunt Ruth complained one day of feeling ill :
Her veins ran red with fever ; and the skill
Of two physicians could not stem the tide.
The house, that rang so late with laugh and jest,
Grew ghostly with low whispered sounds : and when
The Autumn day, that I had thought to be
Bounding upon the billows of the sea,
Came sobbing in, it found me pale and worn,
Striving to keep away that unloved guest
Who comes unbidden, making hearts to mourn.
Through all the anxious weeks I watched beside
The suff'rer's couch, Roy was my help and stay ;
Others were kind, but he alone each day
Brought strength and comfort, by his cheerful face,
And hopeful words, that fell in that sad place
Like rays of light upon a darkened way.

November passed; and Winter crisp and chill,
In robes of ermine walked on plain and hill.
Returning light and life dispelled the gloom
That cheated Death had brought us from the tomb.
Aunt Ruth was saved, and slowly getting better—
Was dressed each day, and walked about the room.
Then came one morning in the Eastern mail,
A little white-winged birdling of a letter.
I broke the seal and read,

"Maurine, my own!
I hear Aunt Ruth is better, and am glad.
I felt so sorry for you; and so sad
To think I left you when I did—alone
To bear your pain and worry, and those nights
Of weary, anxious watching.

Vivian writes
Your plans are changed now, and you will not sail
Before the Springtime. So you'll come and be
My bridesmaid, darling! Do not say me nay.
But three weeks more of girlhood left to me.
Come, if you can, just two weeks from to-day,
And make your preparations here. My sweet!
Indeed I am not glad Aunt Ruth was ill—
I'm sorry she has suffered so; and still
I'm thankful something happened, so you stayed.
I'm sure my wedding would be incomplete
Without your presence. Selfish, I'm afraid
You'll think your Helen. But I love you so,

How can I be quite willing you should go?
Come Christmas Eve, or earlier. Let me know,
And I will meet you, dearie! at the train.
Your happy, loving Helen."
Then the pain
That, hidden under later pain and care,
Had made no moan, but silent, seemed to sleep,
Woke from its trance-like lethargy, to steep
My tortured heart in anguish and despair.

. . . . .

I had relied too fully on my skill
In bending circumstances to my will:
And now I was rebuked and made to see
That God alone knoweth what is to be.
Then came a messenger from Vivian, who
Came not himself, as he was wont to do,
But sent his servant each new day to bring
A kindly message, or an offering
Of juicy fruits to cool the lips of fever,
Or dainty hot-house blossoms, with their bloom
To brighten up the convalescent's room.
But now the servant only brought a line
From Vivian Dangerfield to Roy Montaine,
"Dear Sir, and Friend"—in letters bold and plain,
Written on cream-white paper, so it ran:
"It is the will and pleasure of Miss Trevor,
And therefore doubly so a wish of mine,
That you shall honour me next New Year Eve,

My wedding hour, by standing as best man
Miss Trevor has six bridesmaids I believe
Being myself a novice in the art—
If I should fail in acting well my part,
I'll need protection 'gainst the regiment
Of outraged ladies. So, I pray, consent
To stand by me in time of need, and shield
Your friend sincerely, "Vivian Dangerfield."

The last least hope had vanished ; I must drain,
E'en to the dregs, this bitter cup of pain.

PART VI

There was a week of bustle and of hurry ;
A stately home echoed to voices sweet,
Calling, replying ; and to tripping feet
Of busy bridesmaids, running to and fro,
With all that girlish fluttering and flurry
Preceding such occasions.

Helen's room
Was like a lily-garden, all in bloom,
Decked with the dainty robes of her trousseau.
My robe was fashioned by swift, skilful hands—
A thing of beauty, elegant and rich,
A mystery of loopings, puffs and bands ;
And as I watched it growing, stitch by stitch,

I felt as one might feel who should behold
With vision trance-like, where his body lay
In deathly slumber, simulating clay,
His grave-cloth sewed together, fold on fold.

I lived with ev'ry nerve upon the strain,
As men go into battle; and the pain,
That, more and more, to my sad heart revealed
Grew ghastly with its horrors, was concealed
From mortal eyes by superhuman power,
That God bestowed upon me, hour by hour.
What night the Old Year gave unto the New
The key of human happiness and woe,
The pointed stars, upon their field of blue,
Shone, white and perfect, o'er a world below,
Of snow-clad beauty; all the trees were dressed
In gleaming garments, decked with diadems,
Each seeming like a bridal-bidden guest,
Coming o'erladen with a gift of gems.

The bustle of the dressing-room; the sound
Of eager voices in discourse; the clang
Of "sweet bells jangled"; thud of steel-clad feet
That beat swift music on the frozen ground—
All blent together in my brain, and rang
A medley of strange noises, incomplete,
And full of discords.

Then out on the night
Streamed from the open vestibule, a light
That lit the velvet blossoms which we trod,
With all the hues of those that deck the sod.
The grand cathedral windows were ablaze
With gorgeous colours ; through a sea of bloom,
Up the long aisle, to join the waiting groom,
The bridal cortège passed.

As some lost soul
Might surge on with the curious crowd, to gaze
Upon its coffined body, so I went
With that glad festal throng. The organ sent
Great waves of melody along the air,
That broke and fell, in liquid drops, like spray,
On happy hearts that listened. But to me
It sounded faintly, as if miles away,
A troubled spirit, sitting in despair
Beside the sad and ever-moaning sea,
Gave utterance to sighing sounds of dole.
We paused before the altar. Framed in flowers,
The white-robed man of God stood forth.

I heard.
The solemn service open ; through long hours
I seemed to stand and listen, while each word
Fell on my ear as falls the sound of clay
Upon the coffin of the worshipped dead.
The stately father gave the bride away :
The bridegroom circled with a golden band

The taper finger of her dainty hand.
The last imposing, binding words were said—
"What God has joined let no man put asunder!"—
And all my strife with self was at an end;
My lover was the husband of my friend.

How strangely, in some awful hour of pain,
External trifles with our sorrows blend!
I never hear the mighty organ's thunder,
I never catch the scent of heliotrope,
Nor see stained windows all ablaze with light,
Without that dizzy whirling of the brain,
And all the ghastly feeling of that night,
When my sick heart relinquished love and hope.

The pain we feel so keenly may depart,
And e'en its memory cease to haunt the heart:
But some slight thing, a perfume, or a sound
Will probe the closed recesses of the wound,
And for a moment bring the old-time smart.
Congratulations, kisses, tears and smiles,
Good-byes and farewells given; then across
The snowy waste of weary wintry miles,
Back to my girlhood's home, where, through each
room,
For evermore pale phantoms of delight
Should aimless wander, always in my sight,
Pointing, with ghostly fingers, to the tomb

Wet with the tears of living pain and loss.
The sleepless nights of watching and of care,
Followed by that one week of keenest pain,
Taxing my weakened system, and my brain,
Brought on a ling'ring illness.

Day by day,
In that strange, apathetic state I lay,
Of mental and of physical despair.
I had no pain, no fever, and no chill,
But lay without ambition, strength, or will.
Knowing no wish for anything but rest,
Which seemed, of all God's store of gifts, the best.

Physicians came and shook their heads and sighed:
And to their score of questions I replied,
With but one languid answer, o'er and o'er,
"I am so weary—weary—nothing more."

I slept, and dreamed I was some feathered thing,
Flying through space with ever-aching wing,
Seeking a ship called Rest all snowy white,
That sailed and sailed before me, just in sight,
But always one unchanging distance kept,
And woke more weary than before I slept.

I slept, and dreamed I ran to win a prize,
A hand from heaven held down before my eyes.

All eagerness I sought it—it was gone,
But shone in all its beauty farther on.
I ran, and ran, and ran, in eager quest
Of that great prize, whereon was written "Rest,"
Which ever just beyond my reach did gleam,
And wakened doubly weary with my dream.

I dreamed I was a crystal drop of rain,
That saw a snow-white lily on the plain,
And left the cloud to nestle in her breast.
I fell and fell, but nevermore found rest—
I fell and fell, but found no stopping place,
Through leagues and leagues of never-ending space,
While space illimitable stretched before.

And all these dreams but wearied me the more.

Familiar voices sounded in my room—
Aunt Ruth's, and Roy's, and Helen's: but they seemed
A part of some strange fancy I had dreamed,
And now remembered dimly.
Wrapped in gloom,
My mind, o'ertaxed, lost hold of time at last,
Ignored its future, and forgot its past,
And groped along the present, as a light,
Carried, uncovered, through the fogs of night,
Will flicker faintly.

But I felt, at length,
When March winds brought vague rumours of the spring,
A certain sense of "restlessness with rest."
My aching frame was weary of repose,
And wanted action.

Then slow-creeping strength
Came back with Mem'ry, hand in hand, to bring
And lay upon my sore and bleeding breast,
Grim-visaged Recollection's thorny rose.
I gained, and failed. One day could ride and walk,
The next would find me prostrate: while a flock
Of ghostly thoughts, like phantom birds, would flit
About the chambers of my heart, or sit,
Pale spectres of the past, with folded wings,
Perched, silently, upon the voiceless strings
That once resounded to Hope's happy lays.

So passed the ever-changing April days.
When May came, lightsome footed, o'er the lea,
Accompanied by kind Aunt Ruth and Roy,
I bade farewell to home with secret joy,
And turned my wan face eastward to the sea.
Roy planned our route of travel: for all lands
Were one to him. Or Egypt's burning sands,
Or Alps of Switzerland, or stately Rome,
All were familiar as the fields of home.

There was a year of wand'ring to and fro,
Like restless spirits; scaling mountain heights:
Dwelling among the countless, rare delights
Of lands historic; turning dusty pages,
Stamped with the tragedies of mighty ages
Gazing upon the scenes of bloody acts.
Of kings long buried—bare, unvarnished facts
Surpassing wildest fictions of the brain;
Rubbing against all people, high and low,
And by this contact feeling Self to grow
Smaller and less important, and the vein
Of human kindness deeper, seeing God,
Unto the humble delver of the sod,
And to the ruling monarch on the throne,
given hope, ambition, joy, and pain,
And that all hearts have feelings like our own.

There is no school that disciplines the mind,
And broadens thought, like contact with mankind.
The college-prisoned greybeard, who has burned
The midnight lamp, and book-bound knowledge
learned,
Till sciences or classics hold no lore
He has not conned and studied, o'er and o'er,
Is but a babe in wisdom, when compared
With some unlettered wand'rer, who has shared
The hospitalities of every land;

Felt touch of brother in each proffered hand;
Made man his study, and the world his college,
And gained his grand epitome of knowledge
Each human being has a heart and soul,
And self is but an atom of the whole.
I hold he is best learnèd and most wise
Who best and most can love and sympathise.
Book-wisdom makes us vain and self-contained;
Our banded minds go round in little grooves;
But constant friction with the world removes
These iron foes to freedom, and we rise
To grander heights, and, all untrammelled, find
A better atmosphere and clearer skies;
And through its broadened realm, no longer chained,
Thought travels freely, leaving Self behind.
Where'er we chanced to wander or to roam,
Glad letters came from Helen; happy things,
Like little birds that follow on swift wings,
Bringing their tender messages from home.
Her days were poems, beautiful, complete.
The rhythm perfect, and the burden sweet.
She was so happy—happy, and so blest.

My heart had found contentment in that year.
With health restored, my life seemed full of cheer.
The heart of youth turns ever to the light;
Sorrow and gloom may curtain it like night,

But, in its very anguish and unrest,
It beats and tears the pall-like folds away,
And finds again the sunlight of the day.

And yet, despite the changes without measure,
Despite sight-seeing, round on round of pleasure;
Despite new friends, new suitors, still my heart
Was conscious of a something lacking, where
Love once had dwelt, and afterward despair.
Now love was buried; and despair had flown
Before the healthful zephyrs that had blown
From heights serene and lofty; and the place
Where both had dwelt was empty, voiceless space.
And so I took my long-loved study, art,
The dreary vacuum in my life to fill,
And worked, and laboured, with a right good will.
Aunt Ruth and I took rooms in Rome; while Roy
Lingered in Scotland, with his new-found joy,
A dainty little lassie, Grace Kildare,
Had snared him in her flossy, flaxen hair,
And made him captive.

We were thrown, by chance,
In contact with her people while in France
The previous season: she was wholly sweet
And fair and gentle; so naïve, and yet
So womanly, she was at once the pet
Of all our party; and, ere many days,
Won by her fresh face, and her artless ways,

Roy fell a helpless captive at her feet.
Her home was in the Highlands; and she came
Of good old stock, of fair untarnished fame.

Through all these months Roy had been true as steel;
And by his every action made me feel
He was my friend and brother, and no more,
The same big-souled and trusty friend of yore.
Yet, in my secret heart, I wished I knew
Whether the love he felt one time was dead,
Or only hidden, for my sake, from view.
So when he came to me one day, and said,
The velvet blackness of his eyes ashine
With light of love and triumph: "Cousin, mine,
Congratulate me! She whom I adore
Has pledged to me the promise of her hand;
Her heart I have already," I was glad
With double gladness, for it freed my mind
Of fear that he, in secret, might be sad.

From March till June had left her moons behind,
And merged her rose-red beauty in July,
There was no message from my native land.
Then came a few brief lines, by Vivian penned—
Death had been near to Helen, but passed by;
The danger was now over. God was kind;
The mother and the child were both alive;
No other child was ever known to thrive

As throve this one, nurse had been heard to say.
The infant was a wonder, every way.
And, at command of Helen, he would send
A lock of baby's golden hair to me.
And did I, on my honour, ever see
Such hair before? Helen would write, ere long:
She gained quite slowly, but would soon be strong—
Stronger than ever, so the doctors said.
I took the tiny ringlet, golden—fair,
Mayhap his hand had severed from the head
Of his own child, and pressed it to my cheek
And to my lips, and kissed it o'er and o'er:
All my maternal instincts seemed to rise,
And clamour for their rights, while my wet eyes
Rained tears upon the silken tress of hair.
The woman struggled with her heart before!
It was the mother in me now did speak,
Moaning, like Rachel, that her babes were not,
And crying out against her barren lot.

Once I bemoaned the long and lonely years
That stretched before me, dark with love's eclipse;
And thought how my unmated heart would miss
The shelter of a broad and manly breast—
The strong, bold arm—the tender clinging kiss—
And all pure love's possessions, manifold;
But now I wept a flood of bitter tears,
Thinking of little heads of shining gold,

That would not on my bosom sink to rest ;
Of little hands that would not touch my cheek ;
Of little lisping voices, and sweet lips,
That never in my list'ning ear would speak
The blessed name of mother.

Oh, in woman
How mighty is the love of offspring ! Ere
Unto her wond'ring, untaught mind unfolds
The myst'ry that is half divine, half human,
Of life and birth, the love of unborn souls
Within her, and the mother-yearning creeps
Through her warm heart, and stirs its hidden deeps,
And grows and strengthens with each riper year.

As storms may gather in a placid sky,
And spend their fury, and then pass away,
Leaving again the blue of cloudless day,
E'en so the tempest of my grief passed by.
'Twas weak to mourn for what I had resigned,
With the deliberate purpose of my mind,
To my sweet friend.

Relinquishing my love,
I gave my dearest hope of joy to her.
If God, from out His boundless store above,
Had chosen added blessings to confer,
I would rejoice, for her sake—not repine
That th' immortal treasures were not mine.

Better my lonely sorrow, than to know
My selfish joy had been another's woe;
Better my grief and my strength to control,
Than the despair of her frail-bodied soul;
Better to go on, loveless, to the end,
Than wear love's rose, whose thorn had slain my
friend.

Work is the salve that heals the wounded heart.
With will most resolute I set my aim
To enter on the weary race for Fame,
And if I failed to climb the dizzy height,
To reach some point of excellence in art.

E'en as the Maker held earth incomplete,
Till man was formed, and placed upon the sod,
The perfect, living image of his God,
All landscape scenes were lacking in my sight,
Wherein the human figure had no part.
In that, all lines of symmetry did meet—
All hues of beauty mingle. So I brought
Enthusiasm in abundance, thought,
Much study, and some talent, day by day,
To help me in my efforts to portray
The wond'rous power, majesty and grace
Stamped on some form, or looking from some face.
This was to be my specialty: To take
Human emotion for my theme, and make

The unassisted form divine express
Anger or Sorrow, Pleasure, Pain, Distress;
And thus to build Fame's monument above
The grave of my departed hope and love.
This is not Genius. Genius spreads its wings
And soars beyond itself, or selfish things.
Talent has need of stepping-stones: some cross,
Some cheated purpose, some great pain or loss,
Must lay the groundwork, and arouse ambition,
Before it labours onward to fruition.

But, as the lark from beds of bloom will rise
And sail and sing among the very skies,
Still mounting near and nearer to the light,
Impelled alone by love of upward flight,
So Genius soars—it does not need to climb—
Upon God-given wings, to heights sublime.
Some sportsman's shot, grazing the singer's throat,
Some venomous assault of birds of prey,
May speed its flight toward the realm of day,
And tinge with triumph every liquid note.
So deathless Genius mounts but higher yet,
When Strife and Envy think to slay or fret.

There is no balking Genius. Only death
Can silence it, or hinder. While there's breath
Or sense of feeling, it will spurn the sod,
And lift itself to glory, and to God.

The acorn sprouted—weeds nor flowers can choke
The certain growth of th' upreaching oak.

Talent was mine, not Genius; and my mind
Seemed bound by chains, and would not leave behind
Its selfish love and sorrow.
Did I strive
To picture some emotion, lo! *his* eyes,
Of emerald beauty, dark as ocean dyes,
Looked from the canvas: and my buried pain
Rose from its grave, and stood by me alive.
Whate'er my subject, in some hue or line,
The glorious beauty of his face would shine.

So for a time my labour seemed in vain,
Since it but freshened, and made keener yet,
The grief my heart was striving to forget.

While in his form all strength and magnitude
With grace and supple sinews were entwined,
While in his face all beauties were combined
Of perfect features, intellect and truth,
With all that fine rich colouring of youth,
How could my brush portray aught good or fair
Wherein no fatal likeness should intrude
Of him my soul had worshipped?
But, at last,
Setting a watch upon my unwise heart,
That thus would mix its sorrow with my art,

I resolutely shut away the past,
And made the toilsome present passing bright
With dreams of what was hidden from my sight
In the far distant future, when the soil
Should yield me golden fruit for all my toil.

PART VII

With much hard labour and some pleasure fraught,
The months rolled by me noiselessly, that taught
My hand to grow more skilful in its art,
Strengthened my daring dream of fame, and brought
Sweet hope and resignation to my heart.

Brief letters came from Helen, now and then :
She was quite well—oh yes ! quite well, indeed !
But still so weak and nervous. By-and-by,
When baby, being older, should not need
Such constant care, she would grow strong again.
She was as happy as a soul could be ;
No least cloud hovered in her azure sky ;
She had not thought life held such depths of bliss.
Dear baby sent Maurine a loving kiss,
And said she was a naughty, naughty girl,
Not to come home and see ma's little pearl.
No gift of costly jewels, or of gold,
Had been so precious or so dear to me,
As each brief line wherein her joy was told.

It lightened toil, and took the edge from pain,
Knowing my sacrifice was not in vain.

Roy purchased fine estates in Scotland, where
He built a pretty villa-like retreat.
And when the Roman Summer's languid heat
Made work a punishment, I turned my face
Toward the Highlands, and with Roy and Grace
Found rest and freedom from all thought and care.

I was a willing worker. Not an hour
Passed idly by me: each, I would employ
To some good purpose, ere it glided on
To swell the tide of hours for ever gone.
My first completed picture, known as "Joy,"
Won pleasant words of praise. "Possesses power,"
"Displays much talent," "Very fairly done."
So fell the comments on my grateful ear.

Swift in the wake of Joy, and always near,
Walks her sad sister Sorrow. So my brush
Began depicting Sorrow, heavy-eyed,
With pallid visage, ere the rosy flush
Upon the beaming face of Joy had dried.
The careful study of long months, it won
Golden opinions, even bringing forth
That certain sign of merit—a critique
Which set both pieces down as daubs, and weak
As empty heads that sang their praises—so

Proving conclusively the pictures' worth.
These critics and reviewers do not use
Their precious ammunition to abuse
A worthless work. That, left alone, they know
Will find its proper level; and they aim
Their batteries at rising works which claim
Too much of public notice. But this shot
Resulted only in some noise, which brought
A dozen people, where one came before,
To view my pictures; and I had my hour
Of holding those frail baubles, Fame and Pow'r.
An English Baron who had lived two score
Of his allotted three score years and ten
Bought both the pieces. He was very kind,
And so attentive, I, not being blind,
Misunderstand his meaning.

Therefore, when

He said,

"Sweet friend, whom I would make my wife,
The 'Joy' and 'Sorrow' this dear hand portrayed
I have in my possession: now resign
Into my careful keeping, and make mine,
The joy and sorrow of your future life,"—
I was prepared to answer, but delayed,
Grown undecided suddenly.

My mind

Argued the matter coolly pro and con,
And made resolve to speed his wooing on

And grant him favour. He was good and kind ;
Not young, no doubt he would be quite content
With my respect, nor miss an ardent love ;
Could give me ties of family and home ;
And then, perhaps, my mind was not above
Setting some value on a titled name—
Ambitious woman's weakness !

Then my art
Would be encouraged and pursued the same,
And I could spend my winters all in Rome.
Love never more could touch my wasteful heart
That all its wealth upon one object spent.
Existence would be very bleak and cold,
After long years, when I was grey and old,
With neither home nor children.

Once a wife,
I would forget the sorrow of my life,
And pile new sods upon the grave of pain.
My mind so argued ; and my sad heart heard,
But made no comment.

Then the Baron spoke,
And waited for my answer. All in vain
I strove for strength to utter that one word
My mind dictated. Moments rolled away—
Until at last my torpid heart awoke,
And forced my trembling lips to say him nay.
And then my eyes with sudden tears o'erran,
In pity for myself and for this man

Who stood before me, lost in pained surprise.
"Dear friend," I cried, "dear generous friend, forgive
A troubled woman's weakness! As I live,
In truth I meant to answer otherwise.
From out its store, my heart can give you nought
But honour and respect; and yet methought
I would give willing answer, did you sue.
But now I know 'twere cruel wrong I planned—
Taking a heart that beat with love most true,
And giving in exchange an empty hand.
Who weds for love alone, may not be wise:
Who weds without it, angels must despise.
Love and respect together must combine
To render marriage holy and divine;
And lack of either, sure as Fate, destroys
Continuation of the nuptial joys,
And brings regret, and gloomy discontent
To put to rout each tender sentiment.
Nay, nay! I will not burden all your life
By that possession—an unloving wife;
Nor will I take the sin upon my soul
Of wedding where my heart goes not in whole.
However bleak may be my single lot,
I will not stain my life with such a blot.
Dear friend, farewell! the earth is very wide;
It holds some fairer woman for your bride;
I would I had a heart to give to you.
But, lacking it, can only say—adieu

He whom temptation never has assailed,
Knows not that subtle sense of moral strength;
When sorely tried, we waver, but at length,
Rise up and turn away, not having failed.

The Autumn of the third year came and went;
The mild Italian winter was half spent,
When this brief message came across the sea:
"My darling! I am dying. Come to me.
Love, which so long the growing truth concealed,
Stands pale within its shadow. Oh, my sweet!
This heart of mine grows fainter with each beat—
Dying with very weight of bliss. Oh, come!
And take the legacy I leave to you,
Before these lips for evermore are dumb.
In life or death,—Yours, Helen Dangerfield."
This plaintive letter bore a month old date;
And, wild with fears lest I had come too late,
I bade the old world and new friends adieu,
And with Aunt Ruth, who long had sighed for hon
I turned my back on glory, art, and Rome.

All selfish thoughts were merged in one wild fear
That she, for whose dear sake my heart had bled,
Rather than her sweet eyes should know one tear,
Was passing from me; that she might be dead;

And, dying, had been sorely grieved with me,
Because I made no answer to her plea.

"O, ship, that sailest slowly, slowly on
Make haste before a wasting life is gone!
Make haste that I may catch a fleeting breath!
And true in life, be true e'en unto death.

"O, ship, sail on! and bear me o'er the tide
To her for whom my woman's heart once died.
Sail, sail, O, ship! for she hath need of me,
And I would know what her last wish may be!
I have been true, so true, through all the past.
Sail, sail, O, ship! I would not fail at last."

So prayed my heart still o'er and ever o'er,
Until the weary lagging ship reached shore.
All sad with fears that I had come too late,
By that strange source whence men communicate,
Though miles on miles of space between them lie,
I spoke with Vivian: "Does she live? Reply."
The answer came. "She lives, but hasten, friend!
Her journey draweth swiftly to its end."

Ah me! ah me! when each remembered spot,
My own dear home, the lane that led to his—
The fields, the woods, the lakes burst on my sight,
Oh! then, Self rose up in asserting might;
Oh, then, my bursting heart all else forgot,

But those sweet early years of lost delight
Of hope, defeat, of anguish and of bliss.

I have a theory, vague, undefined,
That each emotion of the human mind,
Love, pain or passion, sorrow or despair,
Is a live spirit, dwelling in the air,
Until it takes possession of some breast;
And, when at length, grown weary of unrest,
We rise up strong and cast it from the heart,
And bid it leave us wholly, and depart,
It does not die, it cannot die; but goes
And mingles with some restless wind that blows
About the region where it had its birth.
And though we wander over all the earth,
That spirit waits, and lingers, year by year,
Invisible and clothèd like the air,
Hoping that we may yet again draw near,
And it may haply take us unaware,
And once more find safe shelter in the breast
It stirred of old with pleasure or unrest.

Told by my heart, and wholly positive,
Some old emotion long had ceased to live;
That, were it called, it could not hear or come,
Because it was so voiceless and so dumb,
Yet, passing where it first sprang into life,
My very soul has suddenly been rife

With all the old intensity of feeling,
It seemed a living spirit, which came stealing
Into my heart from that departed day;
Exiled emotion, which I fancied clay.

So now into my troubled heart, above
The present's pain and sorrow, crept the love
And strife and passion of a bygone hour,
Possessed of all their olden might and power.
'Twas but a moment, and the spell was broken
By pleasant words of greeting, gently spoken,
And Vivian stood before us.
But I saw
In him the husband of my friend alone.
The old emotions might at times return,
And smould'ring fires leap up an hour and burn;
But never yet had I transgressed God's law,
By looking on the man I had resigned,
With any hidden feeling in my mind,
Which she, his wife, my friend, might not have known.
He was but little altered. From his face
The nonchalant and almost haughty grace,
The lurking laughter waiting in his eyes,
The years had stolen, leaving in their place
A settled sadness, which was not despair,
Nor was it gloom, nor weariness, nor care,
But something like the vapour o'er the skies
Of Indian summer, beautiful to see,

But spoke of frosts, which had been and would be.
There was that in his face which cometh not,
Save when the soul has many a battle fought,
And conquered self by constant sacrifice.

There are two sculptors, who, with chisels fine,
Render the plainest features half divine.
All other artists strive and strive in vain,
To picture beauty perfect and complete.
Their statues only crumble at their feet,
Without the master touch of Faith and Pain
And now his face, that perfect seemed before,
Chiselled by these two careful artists, wore
A look exalted, which the spirit gives
When soul has conquered, and the body lives
Subservient to its bidding.

In a room
Which curtained out the February gloom
And, redolent with perfume, bright with flowers,
Rested the eye like one of Summer's bowers,
I found my Helen, who was less mine now
Than Death's; for on the marble of her brow
His seal was stamped indelibly.
Her form
Was like the slender willow, when some storm
Has stripped it bare of foliage. Her face,

Pale always, now was ghastly in its hue :
And, like two lamps, in some dark, hollow place,
Burned her large eyes, grown more intensely blue.
Her fragile hands displayed each cord and vein,
And on her mouth was that drawn look, of pain
Which is not uttered. Yet an inward light
Shone through and made her wasted features bright
With an unearthly beauty ; and an awe
Crept o'er me, gazing on her, for I saw
She was so near to Heaven that I seemed
To look upon the face of one redeemed.
She turned the brilliant lustre of her eyes
Upon me. She had passed beyond surprise,
Or any strong emotion linked with clay.
But as I glided to her where she lay,
A smile, celestial in its sweetness, wreathed
Her pallid features. "Welcome home!" she breathed.
"Dear hands! dear lips! I touch you and rejoice."
And like the dying echo of a voice
Were her faint tones that thrilled upon my ear.

I fell upon my knees beside her bed ;
All agonies within my heart were wed,
While to the aching numbness of my grief,
Mine eyes refused the solace of a tear—
The tortured soul's most merciful relief.
Her wasted hand caressed my bended head
For one sad, sacred moment. Then she said,

In that low tone so like the wind's refrain,
"Maurine, my own! give not away to pain;
The time is precious. Ere another dawn
My soul may hear the summons and pass on.
Arise, sweet sister! rest a little while,
And when refreshed, come hither. I grow weak
With every hour that passes. I must speak
And make my dying wishes known to-night.
Go now." And in the halo of her smile,
Which seemed to fill the room with golden light,
I turned and left her.

Later, in the gloom
Of coming night, I entered that dim room,
And sat down by her. Vivian held her hand:
And on the pillow at her side there smiled
The beauteous count'nance of a sleeping child.

"Maurine," spoke Helen, "for three blissful years,
My heart has dwelt in an enchanted land;
And I have drunk the sweetened cup of joy,
Without one drop of anguish or alloy.
And so, ere Pain embitters it with gall,
Or sad-eyed Sorrow fills it full of tears,
And bids me quaff, which is the fate of all
Who linger long upon this troubled way,
God takes me to the realm of Endless Day
To mingle with His angels, who alone
Can understand such bliss as I have known

I do not murmur. God has heaped my measure,
In three short years, full to the brim with pleasure;
And, from the fulness of an earthly love,
I pass to th' Immortal Arms above,
Before I even brush the skirts of Woe.

"I leave my aged parents here below,
With none to comfort them. Maurine, sweet friend!
Be kind to them, and love them to the end,
Which may not be far distant.

And I leave
A soul immortal in your charge, Maurine.
From this most holy, sad and sacred eve,
Till God shall claim her, she is yours to keep,
To love and shelter, to protect and guide."
She touched the slumb'ring cherub at her side,
And Vivian gently bore her, still asleep,
And laid the precious burden on my breast.

A solemn silence fell upon the scene.
And when the sleeping infant smiled, and pressed
My yielding bosom with her waxen cheek,
I felt it would be sacrilege to speak,
Such wordless joy possessed me.

Oh! at last
This infant, who, in that tear-blotted past,
Had caused my soul such travail, was my own:
Through all the lonely coming years to be

Mine own to cherish—wholly mine alone.
And what I mourned so hopelessly as lost
Was now restored, and given back to me.

The dying voice continued :
"In this child
You yet have me, whose mortal life she cost.
But all that was most pure and undefiled,
And good within me, lives in her again.
Maurine, my husband loves me ; yet I know,
Moving about the wide world, to and fro,
And through, and in the busy haunts of men,
Not always will his heart be dumb with woe,
But sometime waken to a later love.
Nay, Vivian, hush ! my soul has passed above
All selfish feelings ! I would have it so.
While I am with the angels, blest and glad,
I would not have you sorrowing and sad,
In loneliness go mourning to the end.
But, love ! I could not trust to any other
The sacred office of a foster-mother
To this sweet cherub, save my own heart-friend.

"Teach her to love her father's name, Maurine,
Where'er he wanders. Keep my memory green
In her young heart, and lead her in her youth,
To drink from th' eternal fount of Truth :

Vex her not with sectarian discourse,
Nor strive to teach her piety by force;
Ply not her mind with harsh and narrow creeds,
Nor frighten her with an avenging God,
Who rules His subjects with a burning rod;
But teach her that each mortal simply needs
To grow in hate of hate and love of love,
To gain a kingdom in the courts above.

"Let her be free and natural as the flowers,
That smile and nod throughout the summer hours
Let her rejoice in all the joys of youth,
But first impress upon her mind this truth:
No lasting happiness is e'er attained
Save when the heart some *other* seeks to please.
The cup of selfish pleasures soon is drained,
And full of gall and bitterness the lees.
Next to her God, teach her to love her land;
In her young bosom light the patriot's flame
Until the heart within her shall expand
With love and fervour at her country's name.

"No coward-mother bears a valiant son.
And this, my last wish, is an earnest one.

Maurine, my o'er-taxed strength is waning; you
Have heard my wishes, and you will be true
In death as you have been in life, my own!
Now leave me for a little while alone.

With him—my husband. Dear love! I shall rest
So sweetly with no care upon my breast.
Good-night, Maurine, come to me in the morning."

But lo! the Bridegroom with no further warning
Came for her at the dawning of the day.
She heard His voice, and smiled, and passed away
Without a struggle.

"Leaning o'er her bed
To give her greeting, I found but her clay,
And Vivian bowed beside it.

And I said,
"Dear friend! my soul shall treasure thy request,
And when the night of fever and unrest
Melts in the morning of Eternity,
Like a freed bird, then I will come to thee.

"I will come to thee in the morning, sweet!
I have been true; and soul with soul shall meet.
Before God's throne, and shall not be afraid.
Thou gav'st me trust, and it was not betrayed.

"I will come to thee in the morning, dear!
The night is dark. I do not know how near
The morn may be of that Eternal Day;
I can but keep my faithful watch and pray.

"I will come to thee in the morning, love!
Wait for me on the Eternal Heights above.
The way is troubled where my feet must climb,
Ere I shall tread the mountain-top sublime.

"I will come in the morning, O mine own;
But for a time must grope my way alone,
Through tears and sorrow, till the Day shall dawn,
And I shall hear the summons, and pass on.

"I will come in the morning. Rest secure!
My hope is certain and my faith is sure.
After the gloom and darkness of the night
I will come to thee with the morning light."

* * * * *

Three peaceful years slipped silently away.

We dwelt together in my childhood's home,
Aunt Ruth and I, and sunny-hearted May.
She was a fair and most exquisite child;
Her pensive face was delicate and mild
Like her dead mother's; but through her dear eyes
Her father smiled upon me, day by day.
Afar in foreign countries did he roam,
Now resting under Italy's blue skies,
And now with Roy in Scotland.
And he sent
Brief, friendly letters, telling where he went

And what he saw, addressed to May or me.
And I would write and tell him how she grew—
And how she talked about him o'er the sea
In her sweet baby fashion; how she knew
His picture in the album; how each day
She knelt and prayed the blessed Lord would bring
Her own papa back to his little May.

It was a warm bright morning in the Spring.
I sat in that same sunny portico,
Where I was sitting seven years ago
When Vivian came. My eyes were full of tears,
As I looked back across the checkered years.
How many were the changes they had brought!
Pain, death, and sorrow! but the lesson taught
To my young heart had been of untold worth.
I had learned how to "suffer and grow strong"—
That knowledge which best serves us here on earth,
And brings reward in Heaven.

Oh! how long
The years had been since that June morning when
I heard his step upon the walk, and yet
I seemed to hear its echo still.

Just then
Down that same path I turned my eyes, tear-wet,
And lo! the wanderer from a foreign land
Stood there before me!—holding out his hand
And smiling with those wond'rous eyes of old.

To hide my tears, I ran and brought his child ;
But she was shy, and clung to me, when told
This was papa, for whom her prayers were said.
She dropped her eyes and shook her little head,
And would not by his coaxing be beguiled,
Or go to him.

Aunt Ruth was not at home,
And we two sat and talked, as strangers might,
Of distant countries which we both had seen.
But once I thought I saw his large eyes light
With sudden passion, when there came a pause
In our chit-chat, and then he spoke :

"Maurine,
I saw a number of your friends in Rome.
We talked of you. They seemed surprised, because
You were not 'mong the seekers for a name.
They thought your whole ambition was for fame."

"It might have been," I answered, "when my heart
Had nothing else to fill it. Now my art
Is but a recreation. I have *this*
To love and live for, which I had not then."
And, leaning down, I pressed a tender kiss
Upon my child's fair brow.

"And yet," he said,
The old light leaping to his eyes again,
"And yet, Maurine, they say you might have wed

A noble Baron! one of many men
Who laid their hearts and fortunes at your feet.
Why won the bravest of them no return?"
I bowed my head, nor dared his gaze to meet.
On cheek and brow I felt the red blood burn,
And strong emotion strangled speech.

He rose

And came and knelt beside me.

"Sweet, my sweet!"

He murmured softly, "God in Heaven knows
How well I loved you seven years ago.
He only knows my anguish, and my grief,
When your own acts forced on me the belief
That I had been your plaything and your toy.
Yet from his lips I since have learned that Roy
Held no place nearer than a friend and brother.
And then a faint suspicion, undefined,
Of what had been—was—might be, stirred my mind,
And that great love, I thought died at a blow,
Rose up within me, strong with hope and life.

"Before all heaven and the angel mother
Of this sweet child that slumbers on your heart,
Maurine, Maurine, I claim you for my wife—
Mine own, for ever, until death shall part!"

* * *

Through happy mists of upward welling tears,
I leaned, and looked into his beauteous eyes.

"Dear heart," I said, "if she who dwells above
Looks down upon us, from yon azure skies,
She can but bless us, knowing all these years
My soul had yearned in silence for the love
That crowned her life, and left mine own so bleak.
I turned you from me for her fair, frail sake.
For her sweet child's, and for my own, I take
You back to be all mine, for evermore."

* * * * *

Just then the child upon my breast awoke
From her light sleep, and laid her downy cheek
Against her father as he knelt by me.
And this unconscious action seemed to be
A silent blessing, which the mother spoke
Gazing upon us from the mystic shore.

DUST-SEALED

I KNOW not wherefore, but mine eyes
See bloom, where other eyes see blight.
They find a rainbow, a sunrise,
Where others but discern deep night.

Men call me an enthusiast,
And say I look through gilded haze:
Because where'er my gaze is cast,
I see something that calls for praise.

I say, "Behold those lovely eyes—
That tinted cheek of flower-like grace."
They answer in amused surprise:
"We thought it a common face."

I say, "Was ever seen more fair?
I seem to walk in Eden's bowers."
They answer, with a pitying air,
"The weeds are choking out the flowers."

I know not wherefore, but God lent
A deeper vision to my sight.
On whatsoe'er my gaze is bent
I catch the beauty Infinite;

That underlying, hidden half
That all things hold of Deity.
So let the dull crowd sneer and laugh—
Their eyes are blind, they cannot see.

"ADVICE"

I MUST do as you do? Your way I own
Is a very good way. And still,
There are sometimes two straight roads to a town,
One over, one under the hill.

You are treading the safe and the well-worn way,
That the prudent choose each time;
And you think me reckless and rash to-day,
Because I prefer to climb.

Your path is the right one, and so is mine
We are not like peas in a pod,
Compelled to lie in a certain line,
Or else be scattered abroad.

'Twere a dull old world, methinks, my friend,
If we all went just one way;
Yet our paths will meet no doubt at the end,
Though they lead apart to-day.

You like the shade, and I like the sun;
You like an even pace,
I like to mix with the crowd and run,
And then rest after the race.

I like danger, and storm and strife,
You like a peaceful time;
I like the passion and surge of life,
You like its gentle rhyme.

You like buttercups, dewy sweet,
And crocuses, framed in snow;
I like roses, born of the heat,
And the red carnation's glow.

I must live my life, not yours, my friend,
For so it was written down;
We must follow our given paths to the end,
But I trust we shall meet—in town.

OVER THE BANISTERS

OVER the banisters bends a face,
Daringly sweet and beguiling.
Somebody stands in careless grace
And watching the picture, smiling.

The light burns dim in the hall below,
Nobody sees her standing,
Saying good-night again, soft and low,
Halfway up to the landing.

Nobody only the eyes of brown,
Tender and full of meaning,
That smile on the fairest face in town,
Over the banisters leaning.

Tired and sleepy, with drooping head,
I wonder why she lingers;
Now, when the good-nights all are said,
Why, somebody holds her fingers.

He holds her fingers and draws her down,
Suddenly growing bolder,
Till the loose hair drops its masses brown
Like a mantle over his shoulder.

Over the banisters soft hands, fair,
Brush his cheeks like a feather,
And bright brown tresses and dusky hair
Meet and mingle together.

There's a question asked, there's a swift caress,
She has flown like a bird from the hallway,
But over the banisters drops a "Yes,"
That shall brighten the world for him alway.

THE PAST

I FLING my past behind me like a robe
Worn threadbare in the seams, and out of date.
I have outgrown it. Wherefore should I weep
And dwell upon its beauty, and its dyes
Of Oriental splendour, or complain
That I must needs discard it? I can weave
Upon the shuttles of the future years
A fabric far more durable. Subdued,
It may be, in the blending of its hues,
Where sombre shades commingle, yet the gleam
Of golden warp shall shoot it through and through,
While over all a fadeless lustre lies,
And starred with gems made out of crystalled tears,
My new robe shall be richer than the old.

SECRETS

THINK not some knowledge rests with thee alone;
Why, even God's stupendous secret, Death,
We one by one, with our expiring breath,
Do pale with wonder seize and make our own;
The bosomed treasures of the earth are shown,
Despite her careful hiding; and the air
Yields its mysterious marvels in despair

To swell the mighty store-house of things known.
In vain the sea expostulates and raves;
It cannot cover from the keen world's sight
The curious wonders of its coral caves.
And so, despite thy caution or thy tears,
The prying fingers of detective years
Shall drag *thy* secret out into the light.

APPLAUSE

I HOLD it one of the sad certain laws
Which makes our failures sometime seem more kind
Than that success which brings sure loss behind—
True greatness dies, when sounds the world's applause.
Fame blights the object it would bless, because
Weighed down with men's expectancy, the mind
Can no more soar to those far heights, and find
That freedom which its inspiration was.
When once we listen to its noisy cheers
Or hear the populace' approval, then
We catch no more the music of the spheres,
Or walk with gods, and angels, but with men.
Till, impotent from our self-conscious fears,
The plaudits of the world turn into sneers.

THE STORY

THEY met each other in the glade—
She lifted up her eyes ;
Alack the day ! Alack the maid !
She blushed in swift surprise.
Alas ! alas ! the woe that comes from lifting up the eyes.

The pail was full, the path was steep—
He reached to her his hand ;
She felt her warm young pulses leap,
But did not understand.
Alas ! alas ! the woe that comes from clasping hand with hand.

She sat beside him in the wood—
He wooed with words and sighs ;
Ah ! love in Spring seems sweet and good,
And maidens are not wise.
Alas ! alas ! the woe that comes from listing lovers' sighs.

The summer sun shone fairly down,
The wind blew from the south ;
As blue eyes gazed in eyes of brown,
His kiss fell on her mouth.
Alas ! alas ! the woe that comes from kisses on the mouth

And now the autumn time is near,
The lover roves away,
With breaking heart and falling tear,
She sits the livelong day.
Alas! alas! for breaking hearts when lovers rove away.

LEAN DOWN

LEAN down and lift me higher, Josephine!
From the Eternal Hills hast thou not seen
How I do strive for heights? but lacking wings,
I cannot grasp at once those better things
To which I in my inmost soul aspire.
Lean down and lift me higher.

I grope along—not desolate or sad,
For youth and hope and health all keep me glad;
But too bright sunlight, sometimes, makes us blind,
And I do grope for heights I cannot find.
Oh, thou must know my one supreme desire—
Lean down and lift me higher.

Not long ago we trod the self-same way.
Thou knowest how, from day to fleeting day
Our souls were vexed with trifles, and our feet
Were lured aside to by-paths which seemed sweet,
But only served to hinder and to tire;
Lean down and lift me higher.

Thou hast gone onward to the heights serene,
And left me here, my loved one, Josephine;
I am content to stay until the end,
For life is full of promise; but, my friend,
Canst thou not help me in my best desire
And lean, and lift me higher?

Frail as thou wert, thou hast grown strong and wise,
And quick to understand and sympathize
With all a full soul's needs. It must be so,
Thy year with God hath made thee great, I know
Thou must see how I struggle and aspire—
Oh, warm me with a breath of heavenly fire,
And lean, and lift me higher.

LIFE

I FEEL the great immensity of life.
All little aims slip from me, and I reach
My yearning soul toward the Infinite.
As when a mighty forest, whose green leaves
Have shut it in, and made it seem a bower
For lovers' secrets or for children's sports,
Casts all its clustering foliage to the winds,
And lets the eye behold it, limitless,
And full of winding mysteries of ways:
So now with life that reaches out before,
And borders on the unexplained Beyond.

I see the stars above me, world on world :
I hear the awful language of all Space ;
I feel the distant surging of great seas,
That hide the secrets of the Universe
In their eternal bosoms ; and I know
That I am but an atom of the Whole.

THE CHRISTIAN'S NEW YEAR PRAYER

THOU Christ of mine, Thy gracious ear low bending
Through these glad New Year days,
To catch the countless prayers to heaven ascending—
For e'en hard hearts do raise
Some secret wish for fame, or gold, or power,
Or freedom from all care—
Dear, patient Christ, who listeneth hour on hour,
Hear now a Christian's prayer.

Let this young year that, silent, walks beside me,
Be as a means of grace
To lead me up, no matter what betide me,
Nearer the Master's face.
If it need be that ere I reach the Fountain
Where living waters play,
My feet should bleed from sharp stones on the mountain,
Then cast them in my way.

If my vain soul needs blows and bitter losses
To shape it for Thy crown,
Then bruise it, burn it, burden it with crosses,
With sorrows bear it down.
Do what Thou wilt to mould me to Thy pleasure,
And if I should complain,
Heap full of anguish yet another measure
Until I smile at pain.
Send dangers—deaths! but tell me how to dare them;
Enfold me in Thy care.
Send trials, tears! but give me strength to bear them—
This is a Christian's prayer.

IN THE NIGHT

SOMETIMES at night, when I sit and write,
I hear the strangest things,—
As my brain grows hot with burning thought,
That struggles for form and wings,
I can hear the beat of my swift blood's feet,
As it speeds with a rush and a whir
From heart to brain and back again,
Like a race-horse under the spur.

With my soul's fine ear I listen and hear
The tender Silence speak,
As it leans on the breast of Night to rest,
And presses his dusky cheek.

And the darkness turns in its sleep, and yearns
For something that is kin;
And I hear the hiss of a scorching kiss,
As it folds and fondles Sin.

In its hurrying race through leagues of space,
I can hear the Earth catch breath,
As it heaves and moans, and shudders and groans,
And longs for the rest of Death.
And high and far, from a distant star,
Whose name is unknown to me,
I hear a voice that says, "Rejoice,
For I keep ward o'er thee!"

Oh, sweet and strange are the sounds that range
Through the chambers of the night;
And the watcher who waits by the dim, dark gates
May hear, if he lists aright.

A MARCH SNOW

LET the old snow be covered with the new:
The trampled snow, so soiled, and stained, and sodden.
Let it be hidden wholly from our view
By pure white flakes, all trackless and untrodden.
When Winter dies, low at the sweet Spring's feet,
Let him be mantled in a clean, white sheet.

Let the old life be covered by the new:
The old past life so full of sad mistakes,
Let it be wholly hidden from the view
By deeds as white and silent as snow-flakes.
Ere this earth life melts in the eternal Spring
Let the white mantle of repentance fling
Soft drapery about it, fold on fold,
Even as the new snow covers up the old.

PHILOSOPHY

AT morn the wise man walked abroad,
Proud with the learning of great fools.
He laughed and said, "There is no God—
'Tis force creates, 'tis reason rules."
Meek with the wisdom of great faith,
At night he knelt while angels smiled,
And wept and cried with anguished breath,
"Jehovah, *God*, save Thou my child."

"CARLOS"

LAST night I knelt low at my lady's feet.
One soft, caressing hand played with my hair,
And one I kissed and fondled. Kneeling there,
I deemed my meed of happiness complete.

She was so fair, so full of witching wiles—
Of fascinating tricks of mouth and eye;
So womanly withal, but not too shy—
And all my heaven was compassed by her smiles

Her soft touch on my cheek and forehead sent,
Like little arrows, thrills of tenderness
Through all my frame. I trembled with excess
Of love, and sighed the sigh of great content.

When any mortal dares to so rejoice,
I think a jealous Heaven, bending low,
Reaches a stern hand forth and deals a blow.
Sweet through the dusk I heard my lady's voice.

"My love!" she sighed, "my Carlos!" even now
I feel the perfumed zephyr of her breath
Bearing to me those words of living death,
And starting out the cold drops on my brow.

For I am *Paul*—not Carlos! Who is he
That, in the supreme hour of love's delight,
Veiled by the shadows of the falling night,
She should breathe low his name, forgetting me?

I will not ask her! 'twere a fruitless task,
For, woman-like, she would make me believe
Some well-told tale; and sigh, and seem to grieve,
And call me cruel. Nay, I will not ask.

But this man Carlos, whosoe'er he be,
Has turned my cup of nectar into gall,
Since I know he has claimed some one or all
Of these delights my lady grants to me.

He must have knelt and kissed her, in some sad
And tender twilight, when the day grew dim.
How else could I remind her so of him?
Why, reveries like these have made men mad!

He must have felt her soft hand on his brow.
If Heaven were shocked at such presumptuous wrongs,
And plunged him in the grave, where he belongs,
Still she remembers, though she loves me now.

And if he dives, and meets me to his cost,
Why, what avails it? I must hear and see
That curst name "Carlos" always haunting me—
So has another Paradise been lost.

LA MORT D'AMOUR

WHEN was it that love died? We were so fond,
So very fond, a little while ago.
With leaping pulses, and blood all aglow,
We dreamed about a sweeter life beyond,

When we should dwell together as one heart,
And scarce could wait that happy time to come.
Now side by side we sit with lips quite dumb,
And feel ourselves a thousand miles apart.

How was it that love died? I do not know.
I only know that all its grace untold
Has faded into grey! I miss the gold
From our dull skies; but did not see it go.

Why should love die? We prized it, I am sure;
We thought of nothing else when it was ours;
We cherished it in smiling, sunlit bowers:
It was our all; why could it not endure?

Alas, we know not how, or when, or why
This dear thing died. We only know it went,
And left us dull, cold, and indifferent;
We who found heaven once in each other's sigh.

How pitiful it is, and yet how true
That half the lovers in the world, one day,
Look questioning in each other's eyes this way
And know love's gone forever, as we do.

Sometimes I cannot help but think, dear heart,
As I look out o'er all the wide, sad earth
And see love's flame gone out on many a hearth,
That those who would keep love must dwell apart.

LOVE'S SLEEP

(Vers de Société)

WE'LL cover Love with roses,
And sweet sleep he shall take
None but a fool supposes
Love always keeps awake.
I've known loves without number—
True loves were they, and tried;
And just for want of slumber
They pined away and died.

Our love was bright and cheerful
A little while agone;
Now he is pale and tearful,
And—yes, I've seen him yawn.
So tired is he of kisses
That he can only weep;
The one dear thing he misses
And longs for now is sleep.

We could not let him leave us
One time, he was so dear,
But now it would not grieve us
If he slept half a year.

For he has had his season,
Like the lily and the rose,
And it but stands to reason
That he should want repose.

We prized the smiling Cupid
Who made our days so bright;
But he has grown so stupid
We gladly say good-night.
And if he wakens tender
And fond, and fair as when
He filled our lives with splendour
We'll take him back again.

And should he never waken,
As that perchance may be,
We will not weep forsaken,
But sing, "Love, tra-la-lee!"

TRUE CULTURE

THE highest culture is to speak no ill;
The best reformer is the man whose eyes
Are quick to see all beauty and all worth;
And by his own discreet, well-ordered life,
Alone reproves the erring.
When thy gaze
Turns in on thine own soul, be most severe.

But when it falls upon a fellow-man,
Let kindliness control it ; and refrain
From that belittling censure that springs forth
From common lips like weeds from marshy soil.

THE VOLUPTUARY

OH, I am sick of love reciprocated,
Of hopes fulfilled, ambitions gratified.
Life holds nothing to be anticipated,
And I am sad from being satisfied.

The eager joy felt climbing up a mountain
Has left me now the highest point is gained.
The crystal spray that fell from Fame's fair fountain
Was sweeter than the waters were when drained.

The gilded apple which the world calls pleasure,
And which I purchased with my youth and strength,
Pleased me a moment. But the empty treasure
Lost all its lustre, and grew dim at length.

And love, all glowing with a golden glory,
Delighted me a season with its tale.
It pleased the longest, but at last the story,
So oft repeated, to my heart grew stale.

I lived for self, and all I asked was given,
I have had all, and now am sick of bliss,
No other punishment designed by Heaven
Could strike me half so forcibly as this.

I feel no sense of aught but enervation
In all the joys my selfish aims have brought,
And know no wish but for annihilation,
Since that would give me freedom from the thought.

Oh, blest is he who has some aim defeated;
Some mighty loss to balance all his gain.
For him there is a hope not yet completed;
For him hath life yet draughts of joy and pain.

But cursed is he who has no balked ambition
No hopeless hope, no loss beyond repair,
But sick and sated with complete fruition,
Keeps not the pleasure even of despair.

THE COQUETTE

ALONE she sat with her accusing heart,
That, like a restless comrade, frightened sleep,
And every thought that found her left a dart
That hurt her so, she could not even weep.

Her heart that once had been a cup well filled
With love's red wine, save for some drops of gall,
She knew was empty; though it had not spilled
Its sweets for one, but wasted them on all.

She stood upon the grave of her dead truth,
And saw her soul's bright armour red with rust,
And knew that all the riches of her youth
Were Dead Sea apples, crumbling into dust.

Love that had turned to bitter, biting scorn,
Hearthstones despoiled, and homes made desolate,
Made her cry out that she was ever born
To loathe her beauty and to curse her fate.

LIPPO

NOW we must part, my Lippo. Even so,
I grieve to see thy sudden pained surprise;
Gaze not on me with such accusing eyes—
'Twas thine own hand which dealt dear Love's death-blow.

I loved thee fondly yesterday. Till then
Thy heart was like a covered golden cup
Always above my eager lip held up.
I fancied thou wert not as other men.

I knew that heart was filled with Love's sweet wine,
Pressed wholly for my drinking. And my lip
Grew parched with thirsting for one nectared sip
Of what, denied me, seemed a draught divine.

Last evening, in the gloaming, that cup spilled
Its precious contents. Even to the lees
Were offered to me, saying, "Drink of these!"
And, when I saw it empty, Love was killed.

No word was left unsaid, no act undone
To prove to me thou wert my abject slave.
Ah! Love, hadst thou been wise enough to save
One little drop of that sweet wine—but one—

I still had loved thee, longing for it then.
But even the cup is mine. I look within,
And find it holds not one last drop to win,
And cast it down.—Thou art as other men.

LIFE IS LOVE

IS anyone sad in the world, I wonder?
Does anyone weep on a day like this,
With the sun above and the green earth under
Why, what is life but a dream of bliss?

With the sun and the skies and the birds above me,
Birds that sing as they wheel and fly—
With the winds to follow and say they loved me—
Who could be lonely? O ho, not I!

Somebody said in the street this morning,
As I opened my window to let in the light,
That the darkest day of the world was dawning;
But I looked, and the East was a gorgeous sight

One who claims that he knows about it
Tells me the Earth is a vale of sin;
But I and the bees and the birds—we doubt it,
And think it a world worth living in.

Someone says that hearts are fickle,
That love is sorrow, that life is care,
And the reaper Death, with his shifting sickle,
Gathers whatever is bright and fair.

I told the thrush, and we laughed together—
Laughed till the woods were all a-ring;
And he said to me, as he plumed each feather,
"Well people must croak, if they cannot sing!"

Up he flew, but his song, remaining,
Rang like a bell in my heart all day,
And silenced the voices of weak complaining
That pipe like insects along the way.

O world of light, and O world of beauty!
Where are there pleasures so sweet as thine?
Yes, life is love, and love is duty;
And what heart sorrows? O no, not mine!

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